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L. Lytton Bulwer



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Frontispiece.

THE COMING RACE;

OR,

THE NEW UTOPIA.

Leasehold BY *Ed. Lytton*
SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART.

CHICAGO AND NEW YORK:
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THE COMING RACE.

CHAPTER I.

I AM a native of —, in the United States of America. My ancestors migrated from England in the reign of Charles II.; and my grandfather was not undistinguished in the War of Independence. My family, therefore, enjoyed a somewhat high social position in right of birth; and being also opulent, they were considered disqualified for the public service. My father once ran for Congress, but was signally defeated by his tailor. After that event he interfered little in politics, and lived much in his library. I was the eldest of three sons, and sent at the age of sixteen to the old country, partly to complete my literary education, partly to commence my commercial training in a mercantile firm at Liverpool. My father died shortly after I was twenty-one; and being left well off, and having a taste for travel and adventure, I resigned, for a time, all pursuit of the almighty dollar, and became a desultory wanderer over the face of the earth.

In the year 18—, happening to be in —, I was invited by a professional engineer, with whom I had made acquaintance, to visit the recesses of the — mine, upon which he was employed.

The reader will understand, ere he close this narrative, my reason for concealing all clue to the district of which I write, and will perhaps thank me for refraining from any description that may tend to its discovery.

Let me say, then, as briefly as possible, that I accompanied the engineer into the interior of the mine, and became so strangely fascinated by its gloomy wonders, and so interested in my friend's explorations, that I prolonged my stay in the neighborhood, and descended daily, for some weeks, into the vaults and galleries hollowed by nature and art beneath the surface of the earth. The engineer was persuaded that far richer deposits of mineral wealth than had yet been detected, would be found in a new shaft that had been commenced under his operations. In piercing this shaft we came one day upon a chasm jagged and seemingly charred at the sides, as if burst asunder at some distant period by volcanic fires. Down this chasm my friend caused himself to be lowered in a "cage," having first tested the atmosphere by the safety-lamp. He remained nearly an hour in the abyss. When he returned he was very pale, and with an anxious, thoughtful expression of face, very different from its ordinary character, which was open, cheerful, and fearless.

He said briefly that the descent appeared to him unsafe, and leading to no result; and, suspending further operations in the shaft, we returned to the more familiar parts of the mine.

All the rest of that day the engineer seemed preoccupied by some absorbing thought. He was unusually taciturn, and there was a scared, bewildered look in his eyes, as that of a man who has seen a ghost. At night, as we two were sitting alone in the lodging we shared together near the mouth of the mine, I said to my friend:

"Tell me frankly what you saw in that chasm: I am sure it was something strange and terrible. Whatever it be, it has left your mind in a state of doubt. In such a case two heads are better than one. Confide in me."

The engineer long endeavored to evade my inquiries; but as, while he spoke, he helped himself unconsciously out of the brandy-flask to a degree to which he was wholly unaccustomed, for he was a very temperate man, his reserve gradually melted away. He who would keep himself to himself should imitate the dumb animals, and drink water. At last he said: "I will tell you all. When the cage stopped, I found myself on a ridge of rock; and below me, the chasm, taking a slanting direction, shot down to a considerable depth, the darkness of which my

lamp could not have penetrated. But through it, to my infinite surprise, streamed upward a steady brilliant light. Could it be any volcanic fire? in that case, surely I should have felt the heat. Still, if on this there was doubt, it was of the utmost importance to our common safety to clear it up. I examined the sides of the descent, and found that I could venture to trust myself to the irregular projections or ledges, at least for some way. I left the cage and clambered down. As I drew near and nearer to the light, the chasm became wider, and at last I saw, to my unspeakable amaze, a broad level road at the bottom of the abyss, illumined as far as the eye could reach by what seemed artificial gas-lamps placed at regular intervals, as in the thoroughfare of a great city; and I heard confusedly at a distance a hum as of human voices. I know, of course, that no rival miners are at work in this district. Whose could be those voices? What human hands could have levelled that road and marshalled those lamps?

"The superstitious belief, common to miners, that gnomes or fiends dwell within the bowels of the earth, began to seize me. I shuddered at the thought of descending further and braving the inhabitants of this nether valley. Nor indeed could I have done so without ropes, as from the spot I had reached to the bottom of the chasm the sides of the rock sank down abrupt, smooth, and sheer. I retraced my steps with some difficulty. Now I have told you all."

"You will descend again?"

"I ought, yet I feel as if I durst not."

"A trusty companion halves the journey and doubles the courage. I will go with you. We will provide ourselves with ropes of suitable length and strength—and—pardon me—you must not drink more to-night. Our hands and feet must be steady and firm to-morrow."

CHAPTER II.

WITH the morning my friend's nerves were rebraced, and he was not less excited by curiosity than myself. Perhaps more; for he evidently believed in his own story, and I felt considerable doubt of it: not that he would have wilfully told an untruth, but that I thought he must have been under one of those hallucinations which seize on our fancy or our nerves in solitary, unaccustomed places, and in which we give shape to the formless and sound to the dumb.

We selected six veteran miners to watch our descent; and as the cage held only one at a time, the engineer descended first; and when he had gained the ledge at which he had before halted, the cage re-rose for me. I soon gained his side. We had provided ourselves with a strong coil of rope.

The light struck on my sight as it had done the day before on my friend's. The hollow through which it came sloped diagonally: it seemed to me a diffused atmospheric light, not like that from fire, but soft and silvery, as from a northern star. Quitting the cage, we descended, one after the other, easily enough, owing to the juts in the side, till we reached the place at which my friend had previously halted, and which was a projection just spacious enough to allow us to stand abreast. From this spot the chasm widened rapidly like the lower end of a vast funnel, and I saw distinctly the valley, the road, the lamps which my companion had described. He had exaggerated nothing. I heard the sounds he had heard—a mingled indescribable hum as of voices, and a dull tramp as of feet. Straining my eye farther down, I clearly beheld at a distance the outline of some large building. It could not be mere natural rock—it was too symmetrical, with huge heavy Egyptian-like columns, and the whole lighted as from within. I had about me a small pocket-telescope, and by the aid of this I could distinguish, near the building I mention, two forms which seemed human, though I could not be sure. At least they were living, for they moved, and both vanished within the building. We now proceeded to attach the end of the rope we had brought with us to the ledge on

which we stood, by the aid of clamps and grappling-hooks, with which, as well as with necessary tools, we were provided.

We were almost silent in our work. We toiled like men afraid to speak to each other. One end of the rope being thus apparently made firm to the ledge, the other, to which we fastened a fragment of the rock, rested on the ground below, a distance of some fifty feet. I was a younger and a more active man than my companion, and having served on board ship in my boyhood, this mode of transit was more familiar to me than to him. In a whisper I claimed the precedence, so that when I gained the ground I might serve to hold the rope more steady for his descent. I got safely to the ground beneath, and the engineer now began to lower himself. But he had scarcely accomplished ten feet of the descent, when the fastenings, which we had fancied so secure, gave way, or rather the rock itself proved treacherous and crumbled beneath the strain; and the unhappy man was precipitated to the bottom, falling just at my feet, and bringing down with his fall splinters of the rock, one of which, fortunately but a small one, struck and for the time stunned me. When I recovered my senses I saw my companion an inanimate mass beside me, life utterly extinct. While I was bending over his corpse in grief and horror, I heard close at hand a strange sound between a snort and a hiss; and turning instinctively to the quarter from which it came, I saw emerging from a dark fissure in the rock a vast and terrible head, with open jaws and dull, ghastly, hungry eyes—the head of a monstrous reptile resembling that of the crocodile or alligator, but infinitely larger than the largest creature of that kind I had ever beheld in my travels. I started to my feet and fled down the valley at my utmost speed. I stopped at last, ashamed of my panic and my flight, and returned to the spot on which I had left the body of my friend. It was gone; doubtless the monster had already drawn it into its den and devoured it. The rope and the grappling-hooks still lay where they had fallen, but they afforded me no chance of return; it was impossible to reattach them to the rock above, and the sides of the rock were too sheer and smooth for human steps to clamber. I was alone in this strange world, amidst the bowels of the earth.

CHAPTER III.

SLOWLY and cautiously I went my solitary way down the lamp-lit road and toward the large building I have described. The road itself seemed like a great Alpine pass, skirting rocky mountains of which the one through whose chasms I had descended formed a link. Deep below to the left lay a vast valley, which presented to my astonished eye the unmistakable evidences of art and culture. There were fields covered with a strange vegetation, similar to none I have seen above the earth; the color of it not green, but rather of a dull leaden hue or of a golden red.

There were lakes and rivulets which seemed to have been curved into artificial banks; some of pure water, others that shone like pools of naphtha. At my right hand, ravines and defiles opened amidst the rocks, with passes between, evidently constructed by art, and bordered by trees resembling, for the most part, gigantic ferns, with exquisite varieties of feathery foliage, and stems like those of the palm-tree. Others were more like the cane-plant, but taller, bearing large clusters of flowers. Others, again, had the form of enormous fungi, with short thick stems supporting a wide dome-like roof, from which either rose or drooped long slender branches. The whole scene behind, before, and beside me, far as the eye could reach, was brilliant with innumerable lamps. The world without a sun was bright and warm as an Italian landscape at noon, but the air less oppressive, the heat softer. Nor was the scene before me void of signs of habitation. I could distinguish at a distance, whether on the banks of lake or rivulet, or half-way upon eminences, embedded amidst the vegetation, buildings that must surely be the homes of men. I could even discover, though far off, forms that appeared to me human moving amidst the landscape. As I paused to gaze, I saw to the right, gliding quickly through the air, what appeared a small boat, impelled by sails shaped like wings. It soon passed out of sight, descending amidst the shades of a forest. Right above me there was no sky, but only a cavernous roof. This roof grew higher and higher at the distance of the land-

scapes beyond, till it became imperceptible, as an atmosphere of haze formed itself beneath.

Continuing my walk, I started—from a bush that resembled a great tangle of sea-weeds, interspersed with fern-like shrubs and plants of large leafage shaped like that of the aloe or prickly-pear—a curious animal about the size and shape of a deer. But as, after bounding away a few paces, it turned round and gazed at me inquisitively, I perceived that it was not like any species of deer now extant above the earth, but it brought instantly to my recollection a plaster cast I had seen in some museum of a variety of the elk stag, said to have existed before the Deluge. The creature seemed tame enough, and, after inspecting me a moment or two, began to graze on the singular herbage around undismayed and careless.

CHAPTER IV.

I now came in full sight of the building. Yes, it had been made by hands, and hollowed partly out of a great rock. I should have supposed it at the first glance to have been of the earliest form of Egyptian architecture. It was fronted by huge columns, tapering upward from massive plinths, and with capitals that, as I came nearer, I perceived to be more ornamental and more fantastically graceful than Egyptian architecture allows. As the Corinthian capital mimics the leaf of the acanthus, so the capitals of these columns imitated the foliage of the vegetation neighboring them, some aloe-like, some fern-like. And now there came out of this building a form—human;—was it human? It stood on the broad way and looked around, beheld me and approached. It came within a few yards of me, and at the sight and presence of it an indescribable awe and tremor seized me, rooting my feet to the ground. It reminded me of symbolical images of Genius or Demon that are seen on Etruscan vases or limned on the walls of Eastern sepulchres—images that borrow the outlines of man, and are yet of another race. It was tall, not gigantic, but tall as the tallest men below the height of giants.

Its chief covering seemed to me to be composed of large wings folded over its breast and reaching to its

knees; the rest of its attire was composed of an under-tunic and leggings of some thin fibrous material. It wore on its head a kind of tiara that shone with jewels, and carried in its right hand a slender staff of bright metal like polished steel. But the face! it was that which inspired my awe and my terror. It was the face of man, but yet of a type of man distinct from our known extant races. The nearest approach to it in outline and expression is the face of the sculptured sphinx—so regular in its calm, intellectual, mysterious beauty. Its color was peculiar, more like that of the red man than any other variety of our species, and yet different from it—a richer and a softer hue, with large black eyes, deep and brilliant, and brows arched as a semicircle. The face was beardless; but a nameless something in the aspect, tranquil though the expression, and beauteous though the features, roused that instinct of danger which the sight of a tiger or serpent arouses. I felt that this man-like image was endowed with forces inimical to man. As it drew near, a cold shudder came over me. I fell on my knees and covered my face with my hands.

CHAPTER V.

A VOICE accosted me—a very quiet and very musical key of voice—in a language of which I could not understand a word, but it served to dispel my fear. I uncovered my face and looked up. The stranger (I could scarcely bring myself to call him man) surveyed me with an eye that seemed to read to the very depths of my heart. He then placed his left hand on my forehead, and with the staff in his right gently touched my shoulder. The effect of this double contact was magical. In place of my former terror there passed into me a sense of contentment, of joy, of confidence in myself and in the being before me. I rose and spoke in my own language. He listened to me with apparent attention, but with a slight surprise in his looks; and shook his head, as if to signify that I was not understood. He then took me by the hand and led me in silence to the building. The entrance was open—indeed there was no door to it. We entered an immense hall, lighted by the same kind of

lustre as in the scene without, but diffusing a fragrant odor. The floor was in large tessellated blocks of precious metals, and partly covered with a sort of matlike carpeting. A strain of low music, above and around, undulated as if from invisible instruments, seeming to belong naturally to the place, just as the sound of murmuring waters belongs to a rocky landscape, or the warble of birds to vernal groves.

A figure, in a simpler garb than that of my guide, but of similar fashion, was standing motionless near the threshold. My guide touched it twice with his staff, and it put itself into a rapid and gliding movement, skimming noiselessly over the floor. Gazing on it, I then saw that it was no living form, but a mechanical automaton. It might be two minutes after it vanished through a doorless opening, half screened by curtains at the other end of the hall, when through the same opening advanced a boy of about twelve years old, with features closely resembling those of my guide, so that they seemed to me evidently son and father. On seeing me the child uttered a cry, and lifted a staff like that borne by my guide, as if in menace. At a word from the elder he dropped it. The two then conversed for some moments, examining me while they spoke. The child touched my garments, and stroked my face with evident curiosity, uttering a sound like a laugh, but with an hilarity more subdued than the mirth of our laughter. Presently the roof of the hall opened, and a platform descended, seemingly constructed on the same principle as the "lifts" used in hotels and warehouses for mounting from one story to another.

The stranger placed himself and the child on the platform, and motioned to me to do the same, which I did. We ascended quickly and safely, and alighted in the midst of a corridor with doorways on either side.

Through one of these doorways I was conducted into a chamber fitted up with an Oriental splendor; the walls were tessellated with spars, and metals, and uncut jewels; cushions and divans abounded; apertures as for windows, but unglazed, were made in the chamber, opening to the floor; and as I passed along I observed that these openings led into spacious balconies, and commanded views of the illumined landscape without. In cages suspended from the ceiling there were birds of strange form and

bright plumage, which at our entrance set up a chorus of song, modulated into tune as is that of our piping bullfinches. A delicious fragrance, from censers of gold elaborately sculptured, filled the air. Several automata, like the one I had seen, stood dumb and motionless by the walls. The stranger placed me beside him on a divan, and again spoke to me, and again I spoke, but without the least advance toward understanding each other.

But now I began to feel the effects of the blow I had received from the splinters of the falling rock more acutely than I had done at first.

There came over me a sense of sickly faintness, accompanied with acute, lancinating pains in the head and neck. I sank back on the seat, and strove in vain to stifle a groan. On this the child, who had hitherto seemed to eye me with distrust or dislike, knelt by my side to support me; taking one of my hands in both his own, he approached his lips to my forehead, breathing on it softly. In a few moments my pain ceased; a drowsy, happy calm crept over me; I fell asleep.

How long I remained in this state I know not, but when I woke I felt perfectly restored. My eyes opened upon a group of silent forms, seated around me in the gravity and quietude of Orientals—all more or less like the first stranger; the same mantling wings, the same fashion of garment, the same sphinx-like faces, with the deep dark eyes and red man's color; above all, the same type of race—race akin to man's, but infinitely stronger of form and grander of aspect, and inspiring the same unutterable feeling of dread. Yet each countenance was mild and tranquil, and even kindly in its expression. And, strangely enough, it seemed to me that in this very calm and benignity consisted the secret of the dread which the countenances inspired. They seemed as void of the lines and shadows which care and sorrow, and passion and sin, leave upon the faces of men, as are the faces of sculptured gods, or as, in the eyes of Christian mourners, seem the peaceful brows of the dead.

I felt a warm hand on my shoulder; it was the child's. In his eyes there was a sort of lofty pity and tenderness, such as that with which we may gaze on some suffering bird or butterfly. I shrank from that touch—I shrank from that eye. I was vaguely impressed with a belief

that, had he so pleased, that child could have killed me as easily as a man can kill a bird or a butterfly. The child seemed pained at my repugnance, quitted me, and placed himself beside one of the windows. The others continued to converse with each other in a low tone, and by their glances toward me I could perceive that I was the object of their conversation. One in especial seemed to be urging some proposal affecting me on the being whom I had first met, and this last by his gesture seemed about to assent to it, when the child suddenly quitted his post by the window, placed himself between me and the other forms, as if in protection, and spoke quickly and eagerly. By some intuition or instinct I felt that the child I had before so dreaded was pleading in my behalf. Ere he had ceased another stranger entered the room. He appeared older than the rest, though not old; his countenance, less smoothy serene than theirs, though equally regular in its features, seemed to me to have more the touch of a humanity akin to my own. He listened quietly to the words addressed to him, first by my guide, next by two others of the group, and lastly by the child; then turned toward myself, and addressed me, not by words, but by signs and gestures. These I fancied that I perfectly understood, and I was not mistaken. I comprehended that he inquired whence I came. I extended my arm and pointed toward the road which had led me from the chasm in the rock; then an idea seized me. I drew forth my pocket-book and sketched on one of its blank leaves a rough design of the ledge of the rock, the rope, myself clinging to it; then of the cavernous rock below, the head of the reptile, the lifeless form of my friend. I gave this primitive kind of hieroglyph to my interrogator, who, after inspecting it gravely, handed it to his next neighbor, and it thus passed round the group. The being I had at first encountered then said a few words, and the child, who approached and looked at my drawing, nodded as if he comprehended its purport, and, returning to the window, expanded the wings attached to his form, shook them once or twice, and then launched himself into space without. I started up in amaze and hastened to the window. The child was already in the air, buoyed on his wings, which he did not flap to and fro as a bird does, but which were elevated over his head, and seemed to

bear him steadily aloft without effort of his own. His flight seemed as swift as any eagle's; and I observed that it was toward the rock whence I had descended, of which the outline loomed visible in the brilliant atmosphere. In a very few minutes he returned, skimming through the opening from which he had gone, and dropping on the floor the rope and grappling-hooks I had left at the descent from the chasm. Some words in a low tone passed between the beings present: one of the group touched an automaton, which started forward and glided from the room; then the last-comer, who had addressed me by gestures, rose, took me by the hand, and led me into the corridor. There the platform by which I had mounted awaited us; we placed ourselves on it and were lowered into the hall below. My new companion, still holding me by the hand, conducted me from the building into a street (so to speak) that stretched beyond it, with buildings on either side, separated from each other by gardens bright with rich-colored vegetation and strange flowers. Interspersed amidst these gardens, which were divided from each other by low walls, or walking slowly along the road, were many forms similar to those I had already seen. Some of the passers-by, on observing me, approached my guide, evidently by their tones, looks, and gestures addressing to him inquiries about myself. In a few moments a crowd collected round us, examining me with great interest, as if I were some rare wild animal. Yet even in gratifying their curiosity they preserved a grave and courteous demeanor; and after a few words from my guide, who seemed to me to deprecate obstruction in our road, they fell back with a stately inclination of head, and resumed their own way with tranquil indifference. Midway in this thoroughfare we stopped at a building that differed from those we had hitherto passed, inasmuch as it formed three sides of a vast court, at the angles of which were lofty pyramidal towers; in the open space between the sides was a circular fountain of colossal dimensions, and throwing up a dazzling spray of what seemed to me fire. We entered the building through an open doorway and came into an enormous hall, in which were several groups of children, all apparently employed in work as at some great factory. There was a huge engine in the wall which was in full play, with wheels and cylinders re

sembling our own steam-engines, except that it was richly ornamented with precious stones and metals, and appeared to emanate a pale phosphorescent atmosphere of shifting light. Many of the children were at some mysterious work on this machinery, others were seated before tables. I was not allowed to linger long enough to examine into the nature of their employment. Not one young voice was heard—not one young face turned to gaze on us. They were all still and indifferent as may be ghosts, through the midst of which pass unnoticed the forms of the living.

Quitting this hall, my guide led me through a gallery richly painted in compartments, with a barbaric mixture of gold in the colors, like pictures by Louis Cranach. The subjects described on these walls appeared to my glance as intended to illustrate events in the history of the race amidst which I was admitted. In all there were figures, most of them like the manlike creatures I had seen, but not all in the same fashion of garb, nor all with wings. There were also the effigies of various animals and birds wholly strange to me, with backgrounds depicting landscapes or buildings. So far as my imperfect knowledge of the pictorial art would allow me to form an opinion, these paintings seemed very accurate in design and very rich in coloring, showing a perfect knowledge of perspective, but their details not arranged according to the rules of composition acknowledged by our artists—wanting, as it were, a centre; so that the effect was vague, scattered, confused, bewildering—they were like heterogeneous fragments of a dream of art.

We now came into a room of moderate size, in which was assembled what I afterward knew to be the family of my guide, seated at a table spread as for repast. The forms thus grouped were those of my guide's wife, his daughter, and two sons. I recognized at once the difference between the two sexes, though the two females were of taller stature and ampler proportions than the males; and their countenances, if still more symmetrical in outline and contour, were devoid of the softness and timidity of expression which give charm to the face of woman as seen on the earth above. The wife wore no wings, the daughter wore wings longer than those of the males.

My guide uttered a few words, on which all the per-

sons seated rose, and with that peculiar mildness of look and manner which I have before noticed, and which is, in truth, the common attribute of this formidable race, they saluted me according to their fashion, which consists in laying the right hand very gently on the head and uttering a soft sibilant monosyllable—S.Si, equivalent to "Welcome."

The mistress of the house then seated me beside her and heaped a golden platter before me from one of the dishes.

While I ate (and though the viands were new to me, I marvelled more at the delicacy than the strangeness of their flavor), my companions conversed quietly, and, so far as I could detect, with polite avoidance of any direct reference to myself, or any obtrusive scrutiny of my appearance. Yet I was the first creature of that variety of the human race to which I belong that they had ever beheld, and was consequently regarded by them as a most curious and abnormal phenomenon. But all rudeness is unknown to this people, and the youngest child is taught to despise any vehement emotional demonstration. When the meal was ended, my guide again took me by the hand, and, re-entering the gallery, touched a metallic plate inscribed with strange figures, and which I rightly conjectured to be of the nature of our telegraphs. A platform descended, but this time we mounted to a much greater height than in the former building, and found ourselves in a room of moderate dimensions, and which in its general character had much that might be familiar to the associations of a visitor from the upper world. There were shelves on the wall containing what appeared to be books, and indeed were so; mostly very small, like our diamond duodecimos, shaped in the fashion of our volumes, and bound in fine sheets of metal. There were several curious-looking pieces of mechanism scattered about, apparently models, such as might be seen in the study of any professional mechanician. Four automata (mechanical contrivances which, with these people, answer the ordinary purposes of domestic service) stood phantom-like at each angle in the wall. In a recess was a low couch, or bed with pillows. A window, with curtains of some fibrous material drawn aside, opened upon a large balcony. My host stepped out into the balcony; I followed him. We were on the uppermost story of one

of the angular pyramids; the view beyond was of a wild and solemn beauty impossible to describe—the vast ranges of precipitous rock which formed the distant background, the intermediate valleys of mystic many-colored herbage, the flash of waters, many of them like streams of roseate flame, the serene lustre diffused over all by myriads of lamps, combined to form a whole of which no words of mine can convey adequate description; so splendid was it, yet so sombre; so lovely, yet so awful.

But my attention was soon diverted from these nether landscapes. Suddenly there arose, as from the streets below, a burst of joyous music; then a winged form soared into the space; another as in chase of the first, another and another; others after others, till the crowd grew thick and the number countless. But how describe the fantastic grace of these forms in their undulating movements! They appeared engaged in some sport or amusement; now forming into opposite squadrons; now scattering; now each group threading the other, soaring, descending, interweaving, severing; all in measured time to the music below, as if in the dance of the fabled Peri.

I turned my gaze on my host in a feverish wonder. I ventured to place my hand on the large wings that lay folded on his breast, and in doing so a slight shock as of electricity passed through me. I recoiled in fear; my host smiled, and, as if courteously to gratify my curiosity, slowly expanded his pinions. I observed that his garment beneath then became dilated as a bladder that fills with air. The arms seemed to slide into the wings, and in another moment he had launched himself into the luminous atmosphere, and hovered there, still, and with outspread wings, as an eagle that basks in the sun. Then, rapidly as an eagle swoops, he rushed downward into the midst of one of the groups, skimming through the midst, and as suddenly again soaring aloft. Thereon, three forms, in one of which I thought to recognize my host's daughter, detached themselves from the rest, and followed him as a bird sportively follows a bird. My eyes, dazzled with the lights and bewildered by the throngs, ceased to distinguish the gyrations and evolutions of these winged playmates, till presently my host re-emerged from the crowd and alighted at my side.

The strangeness of all I had seen began now to operate fast on my senses; my mind itself began to wander,

Though not inclined to be superstitious, nor hitherto believing that man could be brought into bodily communication with demons, I felt the terror and the wild excitement with which, in the Gothic ages, a traveller might have persuaded himself that he witnessed a *sabbat* of fiends and witches. I have a vague recollection of having attempted with vehement gesticulation, and forms of exorcism, and loud incoherent words, to repel my courteous and indulgent host; of his mild endeavors to calm and soothe me; of his intelligent conjecture that my fright and bewilderment were occasioned by the difference of form and movement between us which the wings that had excited my marvelling curiosity had, in exercise, made still more strongly perceptible; of the gentle smile with which he had sought to dispel my alarm by dropping the wings to the ground and endeavoring to show me that they were but a mechanical contrivance. That sudden transformation did but increase my horror, and as extreme fright often shows itself by extreme daring, I sprang at his throat like a wild beast. On an instant I was felled to the ground as by an electric shock, and the last confused images floating before my sight ere I became wholly insensible, were the form of my host kneeling beside me with one hand on my forehead, and the beautiful calm face of his daughter, with large, deep, inscrutable eyes intently fixed upon my own.

CHAPTER VI

I REMAINED in this unconscious state, as I afterward learned, for many days, even for some weeks, according to our computation of time. When I recovered I was in a strange room, my host and all his family were gathered round me, and to my utter amaze my host's daughter accosted me in my own language with but a slightly foreign accent.

"How do you feel?" she asked.

It was some moments before I could overcome my surprise enough to falter out, "You know my language? How? Who and what are you?"

My host smiled and motioned to one of his sons, who then took from a table a number of thin metallic sheets

on which were traced drawings of various figures—a house, a tree, a bird, a man, etc.

In these designs I recognized my own style of drawing. Under each figure was written the name of it in my language, and in my writing; and in another handwriting a word strange to me beneath it.

Said the host, "Thus we began; and my daughter Zee, who belongs to the College of Sages, has been your instructress and ours too."

Zee then placed before me other metallic sheets, on which, in my writing, words first, and then sentences, were inscribed. Under each word and each sentence strange characters in another hand. Rallying my senses, I comprehended that thus a rude dictionary had been effected. Had it been done while I was dreaming? "That is enough now," said Zee, in a tone of command. "Repose and take food."

CHAPTER VII.

A ROOM to myself was assigned to me in this vast edifice. It was prettily and fantastically arranged, but without any of the splendor of metal-work or gems which was displayed in the more public apartments. The walls were hung with a variegated matting made from the stalks and fibres of plants, and the floor carpeted with the same.

The bed was without curtains, its supports of iron resting on balls of crystal; the coverings, of a thin white substance resembling cotton. There were sundry shelves containing books. A curtained recess communicated with an aviary filled with singing-birds, of which I did not recognize one resembling those I have seen on earth, except a beautiful species of dove, though this was distinguished from our doves by a tall crest of bluish plumes. All these birds had been trained to sing in artful tunes, and greatly exceeded the skill of our piping bullfinches, which can rarely achieve more than two tunes, and cannot, I believe, sing those in concert. One might have supposed one's self at an opera in listening to the voices in my aviary. There were duets and trios, and quartets and choruses, all arranged as in one piece

of music. Did I want to silence the birds? I had but to draw a curtain over the aviary, and their song hushed as they found themselves left in the dark. Another opening formed a window, not glazed, but on touching a spring a shutter ascended from the floor, formed of some substance less transparent than glass, but still sufficiently pellucid to allow a softened view of the scene without. To this window was attached a balcony, or rather hanging-garden, wherein grew many graceful plants and brilliant flowers. The apartment and its appurtenances had thus a character, if strange in detail, still familiar, as a whole, to modern notions of luxury, and would have excited admiration if found attached to the apartments of an English duchess or a fashionable French author. Before I arrived this was Zee's chamber; she had hospitably assigned it to me.

Some hours after the waking up which is described in my last chapter, I was lying alone on my couch trying to fix my thoughts on conjecture as to the nature and genus of the people amongst whom I was thrown, when my host and his daughter Zee entered the room. My host, still speaking my native language, inquired, with much politeness, whether it would be agreeable to me to converse, or if I preferred solitude. I replied that I should feel much honored and obliged by the opportunity offered me to express my gratitude for the hospitality and civilities I had received in a country to which I was a stranger, and to learn enough of its customs and manners not to offend through ignorance.

As I spoke, I had of course risen from my couch: but Zee, much to my confusion, curtly ordered me to lie down again, and there was something in her voice and eye, gentle as both were, that compelled my obedience. She then seated herself unconcernedly at the foot of my bed, while her father took his place on a divan a few feet distant.

"But what part of the world do you come from," asked my host, "that we should appear so strange to you, and you to us? I have seen individual specimens of nearly all the races differing from our own, except the primeval savages who dwell in the most desolate and remote recesses of uncultivated nature, unacquainted with other light than that they obtain from volcanic fires, and contented to grope their way in the dark, as

do many creeping, crawling, and even flying things. But certainly you cannot be a member of those barbarous tribes, nor, on the other hand, do you seem to belong to any civilized people."

I was somewhat nettled at this last observation, and replied that I had the honor to belong to one of the most-civilized nations of the earth; and that, so far as light was concerned, while I admired the ingenuity and disregard of expense with which my host and his fellow-citizens had contrived to illumine the regions unpenetrated by the rays of the sun, yet I could not conceive how any who had once beheld the orbs of heaven could compare to their lustre the artificial lights invented by the necessities of man. But my host said he had seen specimens of most of the races differing from his own, save the wretched barbarians he had mentioned. Now, was it possible that he had never been on the surface of the earth, or could he only be referring to communities buried within its entrails?

My host was for some moments silent; his countenance showed a degree of surprise which the people of that race very rarely manifest under any circumstances, howsoever extraordinary. But Zee was more intelligent, and exclaimed, "So you see, my father, that there is truth in the old tradition; there always is truth in every tradition commonly believed in all times and by all tribes."

"Zee," said my host, mildly, "you belong to the College of Sages, and ought to be wiser than I am; but, as chief of the Light-preserving Council, it is my duty to take nothing for granted till it is proved to the evidence of my own senses." Then, turning to me, he asked me several questions about the surface of the earth and the heavenly bodies; upon which, though I answered him to the best of my knowledge, my answers seemed not to satisfy nor convince him. He shook his head quietly, and, changing the subject rather abruptly, asked how I had come down from what he was pleased to call one world to the other. I answered, that under the surface of the earth there were mines containing minerals, or metals, essential to our wants and our progress in all arts and industries; and I then briefly explained the manner in which, while exploring one of these mines, I and my ill-fated friend had obtained a glimpse of the regions into which we had descended, and how the de-

scent had cost him his life; appealing to the rope and grappling-hooks that the child had brought to the house in which I had been at first received, as a witness of the truthfulness of my story.

My host then proceeded to question me as to the habits and modes of life among the races on the upper earth, more especially among those considered to be the most advanced in that civilization which he was pleased to define "the art of diffusing throughout a community the tranquil happiness which belongs to a virtuous and well-ordered household." Naturally desiring to represent in the most favorable colors the world from which I came, I touched but slightly, though indulgently, on the antiquated and decaying institutions of Europe, in order to expatiate on the present grandeur and prospective pre-eminence of that glorious American Republic, in which Europe enviously seeks its model and tremblingly foresees its doom. Selecting for an example of the social life of the United States that city in which progress advances at the fastest rate, I indulged in an animated description of the moral habits of New York. Mortified to see, by the faces of my listeners, that I did not make the favorable impression I had anticipated, I elevated my theme; dwelling on the excellence of democratic institutions, their promotion of tranquil happiness by the government of party, and the mode in which they diffused such happiness throughout the community by preferring, for the exercise of power and the acquisition of honors, the lowliest citizens in point of property, education, and character. Fortunately recollecting the peroration of a speech, on the purifying influences of American democracy and their destined spread over the world, made by a certain eloquent Senator (for whose vote in the Senate a railway company, to which my two brothers belonged, had just paid 20,000 dollars), I wound up by repeating its glowing predictions of the magnificent future that smiled upon mankind—when the flag of freedom should float over an entire continent, and two hundred millions of intelligent citizens, accustomed from infancy to the daily use of revolvers, should apply to a cowering universe the doctrine of the Patriot Monroe.

When I had concluded, my host gently shook his head, and fell into a musing study, making a sign to me and his daughter to remain silent while he reflected.

And after a time he said, in a very earnest and solemn tone, "If you think as you say, that you, though a stranger, have received kindness at the hands of me and mine, I adjure you to reveal nothing to any other of our people respecting the world from which you came, unless, on consideration, I give you permission to do so. Do you consent to this request?"

"Of course I pledge my word to it," said I, somewhat amazed; and I extended my right hand to grasp his. But he placed my hand gently on his forehead and his own right hand on my breast, which is the custom amongst this race in all matters of promise or verbal obligations. Then turning to his daughter, he said, "And you, Zee, will not repeat to any one what the stranger has said, or may say, to me or to you, of a world other than our own." Zee rose and kissed her father on the temples, saying, with a smile, "A Gy's tongue is wanton, but love can fetter it fast. And if, my father, you fear lest a chance word from me or yourself could expose our community to danger, by a desire to explore a world beyond us, will not a wave of the *vril*, properly impelled, wash even the memory of what we have heard the stranger say out of the tablets of the brain?"

"What is the *vril*?" I asked.

Therewith Zee began to enter into an explanation of which I understood very little, for there is no word in any language I know which is an exact synonym for *vril*. I should call it electricity, except that it comprehends in its manifold branches other forces of nature, to which, in our scientific nomenclature, differing names are assigned, such as magnetism, galvanism, etc. These people consider that in *vril* they have arrived at the unity in natural energetic agencies, which has been conjectured by many philosophers above ground, and which Faraday thus intimates under the more cautious term of correlation:

"I have long held an opinion," says that illustrious experimentalist, "almost amounting to a conviction, in common, I believe, with many other lovers of natural knowledge, that the various forms under which the forces of matter are made manifest have one common origin; or, in other words, are so directly related and mutually dependent, that they are convertible, as it were, into one another, and possess equivalents of power in their action."

These subterranean philosophers assert that by one operation of vril, which Faraday would perhaps call "atmospheric magnetism," they can influence the variations of temperature—in plain words, the weather; that by other operations, akin to those ascribed to mesmerism, electro-biology, odic force, etc., but applied scientifically through vril conductors, they can exercise influence over minds, and bodies animal and vegetable, to an extent not surpassed in the romances of our mystics. To all such agencies they give the common name of vril. Zee asked me if, in my world, it was not known that all the faculties of the mind could be quickened to a degree unknown in the waking state, by trance or vision, in which the thoughts of one brain could be transmitted to another, and knowledge be thus rapidly interchanged. I replied that there were amongst us stories told of such trance or vision, and that I had heard much and seen something of the mode in which they were artificially effected, as in mesmeric clairvoyance; but that these practices had fallen much into disuse or contempt, partly because of the gross impostures to which they had been made subservient, and partly because, even where the effects upon certain abnormal constitutions were genuinely produced, the effects, when fairly examined and analyzed, were very unsatisfactory—not to be relied upon for any systematic truthfulness or any practical purpose, and rendered very mischievous to credulous persons by the superstitions they tended to produce. Zee received my answers with much benignant attention, and said that similar instances of abuse and credulity had been familiar to their own scientific experience in the infancy of their knowledge, and while the properties of vril were misapprehended, but that she reserved further discussion on this subject till I was more fitted to enter into it. She contented herself with adding that it was through the agency of vril, while I had been placed in the state of trance, that I had been made acquainted with the rudiments of their language; and that she and her father, who, alone of the family, took the pains to watch the experiment, had acquired a greater proportionate knowledge of my language than I of their own; partly because my language was much simpler than theirs, comprising far less of complex ideas; and partly because their organization was, by hereditary culture, much more ductile and more

readily capable of acquiring knowledge than mine. At this I secretly demurred; and having had, in the course of a practical life, to sharpen my wits, whether at home or in travel, I could not allow that my cerebral organization could possibly be duller than that of people who had lived all their lives by lamplight. However, while I was thus thinking, Zee quietly pointed her forefinger at my forehead and sent me to sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN I once more awoke I saw by my bedside the child who had brought the rope and grappling-hooks to the house in which I had been first received, and which, as I afterward learned, was the residence of the chief magistrate of the tribe. The child, whose name was Taë (pronounced Tar-ēē), was the magistrate's eldest son. I found that during my last sleep or trance I had made still greater advance in the language of the country, and could converse with comparative ease and fluency.

This child was singularly handsome, even for the beautiful race to which he belonged, with a countenance very manly in aspect for his years, and with a more vivacious and energetic expression than I had hitherto seen in the serene and passionless faces of the men. He brought me the tablet on which I had drawn the mode of my descent, and had also sketched the head of the horrible reptile that had scared me from my friend's corpse. Pointing to that part of the drawing, Taë put to me a few questions respecting the size and form of the monster, and the cave or chasm from which it had emerged. His interest in my answers seemed so grave as to divert him for a while from any curiosity as to myself or my antecedents. But to my great embarrassment, seeing how I was pledged to my host, he was just beginning to ask me where I came from, when Zee fortunately entered, and, overhearing him, said, "Taë, give to our guest any information he may desire, but ask none from him in return. To question him who he is, whence he comes, or wherefore he is here, would be a breach of the law which my father has laid down for this house."

"So be it," said Taë, pressing his hand to his heart;

and from that moment, till the one in which I saw him last, this child, with whom I became very intimate, never once put to me any of the questions thus interdicted.

CHAPTER IX.

It was not for some time, and until, by repeated trances, if they are so to be called, my mind became better prepared to interchange ideas with my entertainers, and more fully to comprehend differences of manners and customs, at first too strange to my experience to be seized by my reason, that I was enabled to gather the following details respecting the origin and history of this subterranean population, as portion of one great family race called the Ana.

According to the earliest traditions, the remote progenitors of the race had once tenanted a world above the surface of that in which their descendants dwelt. Myths of that world were still preserved in their archives, and in those myths were legends of a vaulted dome in which the lamps were lighted by no human hand. But such legends were considered by most commentators as allegorical fables. According to these traditions the earth itself, at the date to which the traditions ascend, was not indeed in its infancy, but in the throes and travail of transition from one form of development to another, and subject to many violent revolutions of nature. By one of such revolutions, that portion of the upper world inhabited by the ancestors of this race had been subjected to inundations, not rapid, but gradual and uncontrollable, in which all, save a scanty remnant, were submerged and perished. Whether this be a record of our historical and sacred Deluge, or of some earlier one contended for by geologists, I do not pretend to conjecture; though, according to the chronology of this people as compared with that of Newton, it must have been many thousands of years before the time of Noah. On the other hand, the account of these writers does not harmonize with the opinions most in vogue among geological authorities, inasmuch as it places the existence of a human race upon earth at dates long anterior to that assigned to the terrestrial formation adapted to the introduction of mam-

malia. A band of the ill-fated race, thus invaded by the Flood, had, during the march of the waters, taken refuge in caverns amidst the loftier rocks, and, wandering through these hollows, they lost sight of the upper world forever. Indeed, the whole face of the earth had been changed by this great revulsion; land had been turned into sea—sea into land. In the bowels of the inner earth, even now, I was informed as a positive fact, might be discovered the remains of human habitation—habitation not in huts and caverns, but in vast cities whose ruins attest the civilization of races which flourished before the age of Noah, and are not to be classified with those genera to which philosophy ascribes the use of flint and the ignorance of iron.

The fugitives had carried with them the knowledge of the arts they had practised above ground—arts of culture and civilization. Their earliest want must have been that of supplying below the earth the light they had lost above it: and at no time, even in the traditional period, do the races, of which the one I now sojourned with formed a tribe, seem to have been unacquainted with the art of extracting light from gases, or manganese, or petroleum. They had been accustomed in their former state to contend with the rude forces of nature; and indeed the lengthened battle they had fought with their conqueror Ocean, which had taken centuries in its spread, had quickened their skill in curbing waters into dikes and channels. To this skill they owed their preservation in their new abode. "For many generations," said my host, with a sort of contempt and horror, "these primitive forefathers are said to have degraded their rank and shortened their lives by eating the flesh of animals, many varieties of which had, like themselves, escaped the Deluge, and sought shelter in the hollows of the earth; other animals, supposed to be unknown to the upper world, those hollows themselves produced."

When what we should term the historical age emerged from the twilight of tradition, the Ana were already established in different communities, and had attained to a degree of civilization very analogous to that which the more advanced nations above the earth now enjoy. They were familiar with most of our mechanical inventions, including the application of steam as well as gas. The communities were in fierce competition with each other.

They had their rich and their poor; they had orators and conquerors; they made war either for a domain or an idea. Though the various states acknowledged various forms of government, free institutions were beginning to preponderate; popular assemblies increased in power; republics soon became general; the democracy to which the most enlightened European politicians look forward as the extreme goal of political advancement, and which still prevailed among other subterranean races, whom they despised as barbarians, the loftier family of Ana, to which belonged the tribe I was visiting, looked back to as one of the crude and ignorant experiments which belong to the infancy of political science. It was the age of envy and hate, of fierce passions, of constant social changes more or less violent, of strife between classes, of war between state and state. This phase of society lasted, however, for some ages, and was finally brought to a close, at least among the nobler and more intellectual populations, by the gradual discovery of the latent powers stored in the all-permeating fluid which they denominate Vril.

According to the account I received from Zee, who, as an erudite professor in the College of Sages, had studied such matters more diligently than any other member of my host's family, this fluid is capable of being raised and disciplined into the mightiest agency over all forms of matter, animate or inanimate. It can destroy like the flash of lightning; yet, differently applied, it can replenish or invigorate life, heal, and preserve, and on it they chiefly rely for the cure of disease, or rather for enabling the physical organization to re-establish the due equilibrium of its natural powers, and thereby to cure itself. By this agency they rend way through the most solid substances, and open valleys for culture through the rocks of their subterranean wilderness. From it they extract the light which supplies their lamps, finding it steadier, softer, and healthier than the other inflammable materials they had formerly used.

But the effects of the alleged discovery of the means to direct the more terrible force of vril were chiefly remarkable in their influence upon social polity. As these effects became familiarly known and skilfully administered, war between the vril-discoverers ceased, for they brought the art of destruction to such perfection

as to annul all superiority in numbers, discipline, or military skill. The fire lodged in the hollow of a rod directed by the hand of a child could shatter the strongest fortress, or cleave its burning way from the van to the rear of an embattled host. If army met army, and both had command of this agency, it could be but to the annihilation of each. The age of war was therefore gone, but with the cessation of war other effects bearing upon the social state soon became apparent. Man was so completely at the mercy of man, each whom he encountered being able, if so willing, to slay him on the instant, that all notions of government by force gradually vanished from political systems and forms of law. It is only by force that vast communities, dispersed through great distances of space, can be kept together; but now there was no longer either the necessity of self-preservation or the pride of aggrandizement to make one state desire to preponderate in population over another.

The Vril-discoverers thus, in the course of a few generations, peacefully split into communities of moderate size. The tribe amongst which I had fallen was limited to 12,000 families. Each tribe occupied a territory sufficient for all its wants, and at stated periods the surplus population departed to seek a realm of its own. There appeared no necessity for any arbitrary selection of these emigrants; there was always a sufficient number who volunteered to depart.

These subdivided states, petty if we regard either territory or population, all appertained to one vast general family. They spoke the same language, though the dialects might slightly differ. They intermarried; they maintained the same general laws and customs; and so important a bond between these several communities was the knowledge of vril and the practice of its agencies, that the word A-Vril was synonymous with civilization; and Vril-ya, signifying "The Civilized Nations," was the common name by which the communities employing the uses of vril distinguished themselves from such of the Ana as were yet in a state of barbarism.

The government of the tribe of Vril-ya I am treating of was apparently very complicated, really very simple. It was based upon a principle recognized in theory, though little carried out in practice, above ground—viz., that the object of all systems of philo-

sophical thought tends to the attainment of unity, or the ascent through all intervening labyrinths to the simplicity of a single first cause or principle. Thus in politics, even republican writers have agreed that a benevolent autocracy would insure the best administration, if there were any guarantees for its continuance, or against its gradual abuse of the powers accorded to it. This singular community elected therefore a single supreme magistrate styled Tur; he held his office nominally for life, but he could seldom be induced to retain it after the first approach of old age. There was indeed in this society nothing to induce any of its members to covet the cares of office. No honors, no insignia of higher rank, were assigned to it. The supreme magistrate was not distinguished from the rest by superior habitation or revenue. On the other hand, the duties awarded to him were marvellously light and easy, requiring no preponderant degree of energy or intelligence. There being no apprehensions of war, there were no armies to maintain; being no government of force, there was no police to appoint and direct. What we call crime was utterly unknown to the Vrilya; and there were no courts of criminal justice. The rare instances of civil disputes were referred for arbitration to friends chosen by either party, or decided by the Council of Sages, which will be described later. There were no professional lawyers; and indeed their laws were but amicable conventions, for there was no power to enforce laws against an offender who carried in his staff the power to destroy his judges. There were customs and regulations to compliance with which, for several ages, the people had tacitly habituated themselves; or if in any instance an individual felt such compliance hard, he quitted the community and went elsewhere. There was, in fact, quietly established amid this state, much the same compact that is found in our private families, in which we virtually say to any independent grown-up member of the family whom we receive and entertain, "Stay or go, according as our habits and regulations suit or displease you." But though there were no laws such as we call laws, no race above ground is so law-observing. Obedience to the rule adopted by the community has become as much an instinct as if it were implanted by nature. Even in every household the head

of it makes a regulation for its guidance, which is never resisted nor even cavilled at by those who belong to the family. They have a proverb, the pithiness of which is much lost in this paraphrase, "No happiness without order, no order without authority, no authority without unity." The mildness of all government among them, civil or domestic, may be signalized by their idiomatic expressions for such terms as illegal or forbidden—viz., "It is requested not to do so and so." Poverty among the Ana is as unknown as crime; not that property is held in common, or that all are equals in the extent of their possessions or the size and luxury of their habitations: but there being no difference of rank or position between the grades of wealth or the choice of occupations, each pursues his own inclinations without creating envy or vying; some like a modest, some a more splendid kind of life; each makes himself happy in his own way. Owing to this absence of competition, and the limit placed on the population, it is difficult for a family to fall into distress; there are no hazardous speculations, no emulators striving for superior wealth and rank. No doubt, in each settlement all originally had the same proportions of land dealt out to them; but some, more adventurous than others, had extended their possessions farther into the bordering wilds, or had improved into richer fertility the produce of their fields, or entered into commerce or trade. Thus, necessarily, some had grown richer than others, but none had become absolutely poor, or wanting anything which their tastes desired. If they did so, it was always in their power to migrate, or at the worst to apply, without shame and with certainty of aid, to the rich, for all the members of the community considered themselves as brothers of one affectionate and united family. More upon this head will be treated of incidentally as my narrative proceeds.

The chief care of the supreme magistrate was to communicate with certain active departments charged with the administration of special details. The most important and essential of such details was that connected with the due provision of light. Of this department my host, Aph-Lin, was the chief. Another department, which might be called the foreign, communicated with the neighboring kindred states, principally for the purpose

of ascertaining all new inventions; and to a third department all such inventions and improvements in machinery were committed for trial. Connected with this department was the College of Sages—a college especially favored by such of the Ana as were widowed and childless, and by the young unmarried females, amongst whom Zee was the most active, and, if what we call renown or distinction was a thing acknowledged by this people (which I shall later show it is not), among the most renowned or distinguished. It is by the female Professors of this college that those studies which are deemed of least use in practical life—as purely speculative philosophy, the history of remote periods, and such sciences as entomology, conchology, etc.—are the more diligently cultivated. Zee, whose mind, active as Aristotle's, equally embraced the largest domains and the minutest details of thought, had written two volumes on the parasite insect that dwells amid the hairs of a tiger's* paw, which work was considered the best authority on that interesting subject. But the researches of the sages are not confined to such subtle or elegant studies. They comprise various others more important, and especially the properties of vril, to the perception of which their finer nervous organization renders the female Professors eminently keen. It is out of this college that the Tur, or chief magistrate, selects Councillors, limited to three, in the rare instances in which novelty of event or circumstance perplexes his own judgment.

There are a few other departments of minor consequence, but all are carried on so noiselessly and quietly that the evidence of a government seems to vanish altogether, and social order to be as regular and unobtrusive as if it were a law of nature. Machinery is employed to an inconceivable extent in all the operations of labor within and without doors, and it is the unceasing object

* The animal here referred to has many points of difference from the tiger of the upper world. It is larger, and with a broader paw, and still more receding frontal. It haunts the sides of lakes and pools, and feeds principally on fishes, though it does not object to any terrestrial animal of inferior strength that comes in its way. It is becoming very scarce even in the wild districts, where it is devoured by gigantic reptiles. I apprehend that it clearly belongs to the tiger species, since the parasite animalcule found in its paw, like that found in the Asiatic tiger's, is a miniature image of itself.

of the department charged with its administration to extend its efficiency. There is no class of laborers or servants, but all who are required to assist or control the machinery are found in the children, from the time they leave the care of their mothers to the marriageable age, which they place at sixteen for the Gy-ei (the females), twenty for the Ana (the males). These children are formed into bands and sections under their own chiefs, each following the pursuits in which he is most pleased, or for which he feels himself most fitted. Some take to handicrafts, some to agriculture, some to household work, and some to the only services of danger to which the population is exposed; for the sole perils that threaten this tribe are, first, from those occasional convulsions within the earth, to foresee and guard against which tasks their utmost ingenuity—irruptions of fire and water, the storms of subterranean winds and escaping gases. At the borders of the domain, and at all places where such peril might be apprehended, vigilant inspectors are stationed with telegraphic communication to the hall in which chosen sages take it by turns to hold perpetual sittings. These inspectors are always selected from the elder boys approaching the age of puberty, and on the principle that at that age observation is more acute and the physical forces more alert than at any other. The second service of danger, less grave, is in the destruction of all creatures hostile to the life, or the culture, or even the comfort, of the Ana. Of these the most formidable are the vast reptiles, of some of which antediluvian relics are preserved in our museums, and certain gigantic winged creatures, half bird, half reptile. These, together with lesser wild animals, corresponding to our tigers or venomous serpents, it is left to the younger children to hunt and destroy; because, according to the Ana, here ruthlessness is wanted, and the younger a child the more ruthlessly he will destroy. There is another class of animals in the destruction of which discrimination is to be used, and against which children of intermediate age are appointed—animals that do not threaten the life of man, but ravage the produce of his labor, varieties of the elk and deer species, and a smaller creature much akin to our rabbit, though infinitely more destructive to crops, and much more cunning in its mode of depredation. It is the first object of these appointed

infants to tame the more intelligent of such animals into respect for enclosures signalized by conspicuous landmarks, as dogs are taught to respect a larder, or even to guard the master's property. It is only where such creatures are found untamable to this extent that they are destroyed. Life is never taken away for food or for sport, and never spared where untamably inimical to the Ana. Concomitantly with these bodily services and tasks, the mental education of the children goes on till boyhood ceases. It is the general custom, then, to pass through a course of instruction at the College of Sages, in which, besides more general studies, the pupil receives special lessons in such vocation or direction of intellect as he himself selects. Some, however, prefer to pass this period of probation in travel, or to emigrate, or to settle down at once into rural or commercial pursuits. No force is put upon individual inclination.

CHAPTER X.

THE word Ana (pronounced broadly *Arna*) corresponds with our plural *men*; An (pronounced *Arn*), the singular, with *man*. The word for woman is Gy (pronounced hard, as in Guy); it forms itself into Gy-ei for the plural, but the G becomes soft in the plural like Jy-ei. They have a proverb to the effect that this difference in pronunciation is symbolical, for that the female sex is soft in the concrete, but hard to deal with in the individual. The Gy-ei are in the fullest enjoyment of all the rights of equality with males, for which certain philosophers above ground contend.

In childhood they perform the offices of work and labor impartially with the boys, and, indeed, in the earlier age appropriated to the destruction of animals irreclaimably hostile, the girls are frequently preferred, as being by constitution more ruthless under the influence of fear or hate. In the interval between infancy and the marriageable age familiar intercourse between the sexes is suspended. At the marriageable age it is renewed, never with worse consequences than those which attend upon marriage. All arts and vocations allotted to the one sex are open to the other, and the Gy-ei arrogate to them-

selves a superiority in all those abstruse and mystical branches of reasoning, for which they say the Ana are unfitted by a duller sobriety of understanding, or the routine of their matter-of-fact occupations, just as young ladies in our own world constitute themselves authorities in the subtlest points of theological doctrine, for which few men, actively engaged in worldly business, have sufficient learning or refinement of intellect. Whether owing to early training in gymnastic exercises or to their constitutional organization, the Gy-ei are usually superior to the Ana in physical strength (an important element in the consideration and maintenance of female rights). They attain to loftier stature, and amid their rounder proportions are embedded sinews and muscles as hardy as those of the other sex. Indeed they assert that, according to the original laws of nature, females were intended to be larger than males, and maintain this dogma by reference to the earliest formations of life in insects, and in the most ancient family of the vertebrata—viz., fishes—in both of which the females are generally large enough to make a meal of their consorts if they so desire. Above all, the Gy-ei have a readier and more concentrated power over that mysterious fluid or agency which contains the element of destruction, with a larger portion of that sagacity which comprehends dissimulation. Thus they can not only defend themselves against all aggressions from the males, but could, at any moment when he least expected his danger, terminate the existence of an offending spouse. To the credit of the Gy-ei no instance of their abuse of this awful superiority in the art of destruction is on record for several ages. The last that occurred in the community I speak of appears (according to their chronology) to have been about two thousand years ago. A Gy, then, in a fit of jealousy, slew her husband; and this abominable act inspired such terror among the males that they emigrated in a body and left all the Gy-ei to themselves. The history runs that the widowed Gy-ei, thus reduced to despair, fell upon the murderess when in her sleep (and therefore unarmed), and killed her, and then entered into a solemn obligation amongst themselves to abrogate forever the exercise of their extreme conjugal powers, and to inculcate the same obligation forever and ever on their female children. By this conciliatory process, a deputation despatched to the

fugitive consorts succeeded in persuading many to return, but those who did return were mostly the elder ones. The younger, either from too craven a doubt of their consorts, or too high an estimate of their own merits, rejected all overtures, and, remaining in other communities, were caught up there by other mates, with whom perhaps they were no better off. But the loss of so large a portion of the male youth operated as a salutary warning on the Gy-ei, and confirmed them in the pious resolution to which they had pledged themselves. Indeed it is now popularly considered that, by long hereditary disuse, the Gy-ei have lost both the aggressive and the defensive superiority over the Ana which they once possessed, just as in the inferior animals above the earth many peculiarities in their original formation, intended by nature for their protection, gradually fade or become inoperative when not needed under altered circumstances. I should be sorry, however, for any An who induced a Gy to make the experiment whether he or she were the stronger.

From the incident I have narrated, the Ana date certain alterations in the marriage customs, tending, perhaps, somewhat to the advantage of the male. They now bind themselves in wedlock only for three years; at the end of each third year either male or female can divorce the other and is free to marry again. At the end of ten years the An has the privilege of taking a second wife, allowing the first to retire if she so please. These regulations are for the most part a dead letter; divorces and polygamy are extremely rare, and the marriage state now seems singularly happy and serene among this astonishing people—the Gy-ei, notwithstanding their boastful superiority in physical strength and intellectual abilities, being much curbed into gentle manners by the dread of separation or of a second wife, and the Ana being very much the creatures of custom, and not, except under great aggravation, likely to exchange for hazardous novelties faces and manners to which they are reconciled by habit. But there is one privilege the Gy-ei carefully retain, and the desire for which perhaps forms the secret motive of most lady asserters of woman's rights above ground. They claim the privilege, here usurped by men, of proclaiming their love and urging their suit; in other words, of being the wooing party

rather than the wooed. Such a phenomenon as an old maid does not exist among the Gy-ei. Indeed it is very seldom that a Gy does not secure any An upon whom she sets her heart, if his affections be not strongly engaged elsewhere. However coy, reluctant, and prudish the male she courts may prove at first, yet her perseverance, her ardor, her persuasive powers, her command over the mystic agencies of vril, are pretty sure to run down his neck into what we call "the fatal noose." Their argument for the reversal of that relationship of the sexes which the blind tyranny of man has established on the surface of the earth, appears cogent, and is advanced with a frankness which might well be commended to impartial consideration. They say, that of the two the female is by nature of a more loving disposition than the male—that love occupies a larger space in her thoughts, and is more essential to her happiness, and that therefore she ought to be the wooing party; that otherwise the male is a shy and dubitant creature—that he has often a selfish predilection for the single state—that he often pretends to misunderstand tender glances and delicate hints—that, in short, he must be resolutely pursued and captured. They add, moreover, that unless the Gy can secure the An of her choice, and one whom she would not select out of the whole world becomes her mate, she is not only less happy than she otherwise would be, but she is not so good a being, that her qualities of heart are not sufficiently developed; whereas the An is a creature that less lastingly concentrates his affections on one object; that if he cannot get the Gy whom he prefers he easily reconciles himself to another Gy; and, finally, that at the worst, if he is loved and taken care of, it is less necessary to the welfare of his existence that he should love as well as be loved; he grows contented with his creature comforts, and the many occupations of thought which he creates for himself.

Whatever may be said as to this reasoning, the system works well for the male; for being thus sure that he is truly and ardently loved, and that the more coy and reluctant he shows himself, the more the determination to secure him increases, he generally contrives to make his consent dependent on such conditions as he thinks the best calculated to insure, if not a blissful, at least a peaceful life. Each individual An has his own hobbies,

his own ways, his own predilections, and, whatever they may be, he demands a promise of full and unrestrained concession to them. This, in the pursuit of her object, the Gy readily promises; and as the characteristic of this extraordinary people is an implicit veneration for truth, and her word once given is never broken even by the giddiest Gy, the conditions stipulated for are religiously observed. In fact, notwithstanding all their abstract rights and powers, the Gy-ei are the most amiable, conciliatory, and submissive wives I have ever seen even in the happiest households above ground. It is an aphorism among them, that "where a Gy loves it is her pleasure to obey." It will be observed that in the relationship of the sexes I have spoken only of marriage, for such is the moral perfection to which this community has attained, that any illicit connection is as little possible amongst them as it would be to a couple of linnets during the time they agreed to live in pairs.

CHAPTER XI.

NOTHING had more perplexed me in seeking to reconcile my sense to the existence of regions extending below the surface of the earth, and habitable by beings, if dissimilar from, still, in all material points of organism, akin to those in the upper world, than the contradiction thus presented to the doctrine in which, I believe, most geologists and philosophers concur—viz., that though with us the sun is the great source of heat, yet the deeper we go beneath the crust of the earth, the greater is the increasing heat, being, it is said, found in the ratio of a degree for every foot, commencing from fifty feet below the surface. But though the domains of the tribe I speak of were, on the higher ground, so comparatively near to the surface, that I could account for a temperature, therein, suitable to organic life, yet even the ravines and valleys of that realm were much less hot than philosophers would deem possible at such a depth—certainly not warmer than the south of France, or at least of Italy. And according to all the accounts I received, vast tracts immeasurably deeper beneath the surface, and in which one might have thought only salamanders could exist,

were inhabited by innumerable races organized like ourselves. I cannot pretend in any way to account for a fact which is so at variance with the recognized laws of science, nor could Zee much help me toward a solution of it. She did but conjecture that sufficient allowance had not been made by our philosophers for the extreme porousness of the interior earth—the vastness of its cavities and irregularities, which served to create free currents of air and frequent winds—and for the various modes in which heat is evaporated and thrown off. She allowed, however, that there was a depth at which the heat was deemed to be intolerable to such organized life as was known to the experience of the Vril-ya, though their philosophers believed that even in such places life of some kind, life sentient, life intellectual, would be found abundant and thriving, could the philosophers penetrate to it. “Wherever the All-Good builds,” said she, “there, be sure, He places inhabitants. He loves not empty dwellings.” She added, however, that many changes in temperature and climate had been effected by the skill of the Vril-ya, and that the agency of vril had been successfully employed in such changes. She described a subtle and life-giving medium called Lai, which I suspect to be identical with the ethereal oxygen of Dr. Lewins, wherein work all the correlative forces united under the name of vril; and contended that wherever this medium could be expanded, as it were, sufficiently for the various agencies of vril to have ample play, a temperature congenial to the highest forms of life could be secured. She said also, that it was the belief of their naturalists that flowers and vegetation had been produced originally (whether developed from seeds borne from the surface of the earth in the earlier convulsions of nature, or imported by the tribes that first sought refuge in cavernous hollows) through the operations of the light constantly brought to bear on them, and the gradual improvement in culture. She said also, that since the vril light had superseded all other life-giving bodies, the colors of flower and foliage had become more brilliant, and vegetation had acquired larger growth.

Leaving these matters to the consideration of those better competent to deal with them, I must now devote a few pages to the very interesting questions connected with the language of the Vril-ya.

CHAPTER XII.

THE language of the Vril-ya is peculiarly interesting, because it seems to me to exhibit with great clearness the traces of the three main transitions through which language passes in attaining to perfection of form.

One of the most illustrious of recent philologists, Max Müller, in arguing for the analogy between the strata of language and the strata of the earth, lays down this absolute dogma: "No language can, by any possibility, be inflectional without having passed through the agglutinative and isolating stratum. No language can be agglutinative without clinging with its roots to the underlying stratum of isolation."—"*On the Stratification of Language*," p. 20.

Taking then the Chinese language as the best existing type of the original isolating stratum, "as the faithful photograph of man in his leading-strings trying the muscles of his mind, groping his way, and so delighted with his first successful grasps that he repeats them again and again,"*—we have, in the language of the Vril-ya, still "clinging with its roots to the underlying stratum," the evidences of the original isolation. It abounds in monosyllables, which are the foundations of the language. The transition into the agglutinative form marks an epoch that must have gradually extended through ages, the written literature of which has only survived in a few fragments of symbolical mythology and certain pithy sentences which have passed into popular proverbs. With the extant literature of the Vril-ya the inflectional stratum commences. No doubt at that time there must have operated concurrent causes, in the fusion of races by some dominant people, and the rise of some great literary phenomena by which the form of language became arrested and fixed. As the inflectional stage prevailed over the agglutinative, it is surprising to see how much more boldly the original roots of the language project from the surface that conceals them. In the old fragments and proverbs of the preceding stage the monosyllables which compose those roots vanish amidst

* Max Müller, "*Stratification of Language*," p. 13.

words of enormous length, comprehending whole sentences from which no one part can be disentangled from the other and employed separately. But when the inflectional form of language became so far advanced as to have its scholars and grammarians, they seem to have united in extirpating all such polysynthetical or polysyllabic monsters, as devouring invaders of the aboriginal forms. Words beyond three syllables became proscribed as barbarous, and in proportion as the language grew thus simplified it increased in strength, in dignity, and in sweetness. Though now very compressed in sound, it gains in clearness by that compression. By a single letter, according to its position, they contrive to express all that with civilized nations in our upper world it takes the waste, sometimes of syllables, sometimes of sentences, to express. Let me here cite one or two instances: An (which I will translate man), Ana (men); the letter *s* is with them a letter implying multitude, according to where it is placed; Sana means mankind; Ansa a multitude of men. The prefix of certain letters in their alphabet invariably denotes compound significations. For instance, Gl (which with them is a single letter, as *th* is a single letter with the Greeks) at the commencement of a word infers an assemblage or union of things, sometimes kindred, sometimes dissimilar—as Oon, a house; Gloon, a town (*i.e.*, an assemblage of houses). Ata is sorrow; Glata, a public calamity. Aur-an is the health or well-being of a man; Glauran, the well-being of the State, the good of the community; and a word constantly in their mouths is A-glauran, which denotes their political creed—*viz.*, that “the first principle of a community is the good of all.” Aub is invention; sila, a tone in music. Glaubsila, as uniting the ideas of invention and of musical intonation, is the classical word for poetry—abbreviated, in ordinary conversation, to Glaubs. Na, which with them is, like Gl, but a single letter, always, when an initial, implies something antagonistic to life or joy or comfort, resembling in this the Aryan root Nak, expressive of perishing or destruction. Nax is darkness; Narl, death; Naria, sin or evil. Nas—an uttermost condition of sin and evil—corruption. In writing, they deem it irreverent to express the Supreme Being by any special name. He is symbolized by what may be termed the hieroglyphic of a pyramid, A. In prayer they address

Him by a name which they deem too sacred to confide to a stranger, and I know it not. In conversation they generally use a periphrastic epithet, such as the All-Good. The letter V, symbolical of the inverted pyramid, where it is an initial, nearly always denotes excellence or power; as Vrîl, of which I have said so much; Veed, an immortal spirit; Veed-ya, immortality; Koom, pronounced like the Welsh Cwm, denotes something of hollowness. Koom itself is a cave; Koom-in, a hole; Zi-koom, a valley; Koom-zi, vacancy or void; Bodh-koom, ignorance (literally, knowledge-void). Koom-Posh is their name for the government of the many, or the ascendancy of the most ignorant or hollow. Posh is an almost untranslatable idiom, implying, as the reader will see later, contempt. The closest rendering I can give to it is our slang term "bosh;" and thus Koom-Posh may be loosely rendered "Hollow-Bosh." But when Democracy or Koom Posh degenerates from popular ignorance into that popular passion or ferocity which precedes its decease, as (to cite illustrations from the upper world) during the French Reign of Terror, or for the fifty years of the Roman Republic preceding the ascendancy of Augustus, their name for that state of things is Glek-Nas. Ek is strife—Glek, the universal strife. Nas, as I before said, is corruption or rot; thus Glek-Nas may be construed, "the universal strife-rot." Their compounds are very expressive; thus, Bodh being knowledge, and Too a participle that implies the action of cautiously approaching,—Too-bodh is their word for Philosophy; Pah is a contemptuous exclamation analogous to our idiom, "stuff and nonsense;" Pah-bodh (literally, stuff-and-nonsense-knowledge) is their term for futile or false philosophy, and applied to a species of metaphysical or speculative ratiocination formerly in vogue, which consisted in making inquiries that could not be answered, and were not worth making; such, for instance, as "Why does an An have five toes to his feet instead of four or six? Did the first An, created by the All-Good, have the same number of toes as his descendants? In the form by which an An will be recognized by his friends in the future state of being, will he retain any toes at all, and, if so, will they be material toes or spiritual toes?" I take these illustrations of Pah-bodh, not in irony or jest, but because the very inquiries I name

formed the subject of controversy by the latest cultivators of that "science"—4000 years ago.

In the declension of nouns I was informed that anciently there were eight cases (one more than in the Sanscrit Grammar); but the effect of time has been to reduce these cases, and multiply, instead of these varying terminations, explanatory prepositions. At present, in the Grammar submitted to my study, there were four cases to nouns, three having varying terminations, and the fourth a differing prefix.

SINGULAR.			PLURAL.		
Nom.	An,	Man.	Nom.	Ana,	Men.
Dat.	Ano,	to Man.	Dat.	Anoi,	to Men.
Ac.	Anan,	Man.	Ac.	Ananda,	Men.
Voc.	Hil-An,	O Man.	Voc.	Hil-Ananda,	O Men.

In the elder inflectional literature the dual form existed—it has long been obsolete.

The genitive case with them is also obsolete; the dative supplies its place: they say the House *to* a Man, instead of the House *of* a Man. When used (sometimes in poetry), the genitive in the termination is the same as the nominative; so is the ablative, the preposition that marks it being a prefix or suffix at option, and generally decided by ear, according to the sound of the noun. It will be observed that the prefix Hil marks the vocative case. It is always retained in addressing another, except in the most intimate domestic relations; its omission would be considered rude: just as in our old forms of speech in addressing a king it would have been deemed disrespectful to say "King," and reverential to say "O King." In fact, as they have no titles of honor, the vocative adjuration supplies the place of a title, and is given impartially to all. The prefix Hil enters into the composition of words that imply distant communications, as Hil-ya, to travel.

In the conjugation of their verbs, which is much too lengthy a subject to enter on here, the auxiliary verb Ya, "to go," which plays so considerable part in the Sanscrit, appears and performs a kindred office, as if it were a radical in some language from which both had descended. But another auxiliary of opposite signification also accompanies it and shares its labors—viz., Zi, to stay

or repose. Thus Ya enters into the future tense, and Zi in the preterit of all verbs requiring auxiliaries. Yam, I go—Yiam, I may go—Yani-ya, I shall go (literally, I go to go), Zam-poo-yan, I have gone (literally, I rest from gone). Ya, as a termination, implies, by analogy, progress, movement, efflorescence. Zi, as a terminal, denotes fixity, sometimes in a good sense, sometimes in a bad, according to the word with which it is coupled. Iva-zi, eternal goodness; Nan-zi, eternal evil. Poo (from) enters as a prefix to words that denote repugnance, or things from which we ought to be averse. Poo-pra, disgust; Poo-naria, falsehood, the vilest kind of evil. Poosh or Posh I have already confessed to be untranslatable literally. It is an expression of contempt not unmixed with pity. This radical seems to have originated from inherent sympathy between the labial effort and the sentiment that impelled it, Poo being an utterance in which the breath is exploded from the lips with more or less vehemence. On the other hand, Z, when an initial, is with them a sound in which the breath is sucked inward, and thus Zu, pronounced Zoo (which in their language is one letter), is the ordinary prefix to words that signify something that attracts, pleases, touches the heart—as Zummer, lover; Zutze, love; Zuzulia, delight. This indrawn sound of Z seems indeed naturally appropriate to fondness. Thus, even in our language, mothers say to their babies, in defiance of grammar, “Zoo darling;” and I have heard a learned professor at Boston call his wife (he had been only married a month) “Zoo little pet.”

I cannot quit this subject, however, without observing by what slight changes in the dialects favored by different tribes of the same race, the original signification and beauty of sounds may become confused and deformed. Zee told me with much indignation that Zummer (lover) which, in the way she uttered it, seemed slowly taken down to the very depths of her heart, was, in some not very distant communities of the Vril-ya, vitiated into the half-hissing, half-nasal, wholly disagreeable, sound of Subber. I thought to myself it only wanted the introduction of *u* before *n* to render it into an English word significant of the last quality an amorous Gy would desire in her Zummer.

I will but mention another peculiarity in this language

which gives equal force and brevity to its forms of expressions.

A is with them, as with us, the first letter of the alphabet, and is often used as a prefix word by itself to convey a complex idea of sovereignty or chiefdom, or presiding principle. For instance, Iva is goodness; Diva, goodness and happiness united; A-Diva is unerring and absolute truth. I have already noticed the value of A in A-glauran, so, in vril (to whose properties they trace their present state of civilization), A-vril denotes, as I have said, civilization itself.

The philologist will have seen from the above how much the language of the Vril-ya is akin to the Aryan or Indo-Germanic; but, like all languages, it contains words and forms in which transfers from very opposite sources of speech have been taken. The very title of Tur, which they give to their supreme magistrate, indicates theft from a tongue akin to the Turanian. They say themselves that this is a foreign word borrowed from a title which their historical records show to have been borne by the chief of a nation with whom the ancestors of the Vril-ya were, in very remote periods, on friendly terms, but which has long become extinct, and they say that when, after the discovery of vril, they remodelled their political institutions, they expressly adopted a title taken from an extinct race and a dead language for that of their chief magistrate, in order to avoid all titles for that office with which they had previous associations.

Should life be spared to me, I may collect into systematic form such knowledge as I acquired of this language during my sojourn amongst the Vril-ya. But what I have already said will perhaps suffice to show to genuine philological students that a language which, preserving so many of the roots in the aboriginal form, and clearing from the immediate, but transitory, polysynthetical stage so many rude incumbrances, has attained to such a union of simplicity and compass in its final inflectional forms, must have been the gradual work of countless ages and many varieties of mind; that it contains the evidence of fusion between congenial races, and necessitated, in arriving at the shape of which I have given examples, the continuous culture of a highly thoughtful people.

That, nevertheless, the literature which belongs to this language is a literature of the past—that the present fe-

licitous state of society at which the Ana have attained forbids the progressive cultivation of literature, especially in the two main divisions of fiction and history—I shall have occasion to show later.

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS people have a religion, and, whatever may be said against it, at least it has these strange peculiarities: firstly, that they all believe in the creed they profess; secondly, that they all practise the precepts which the creed inculcates. They unite in the worship of the one divine Creator and Sustainer of the universe. They believe that it is one of the properties of the all-permeating agency of vril to transmit to the well-spring of life and intelligence every thought that a living creature can conceive; and though they do not contend that the idea of a Deity is innate, yet they say that the An (man) is the only creature, so far as their observation of nature extends, to whom *the capacity of conceiving that idea*, with all the trains of thought which open out from it, is vouchsafed. They hold that this capacity is a privilege that cannot have been given in vain, and hence that prayer and thanksgiving are acceptable to the divine Creator, and necessary to the complete development of the human creature. They offer their devotions both in private and public. Not being considered one of their species, I was not admitted into the building or temple in which the public worship is rendered; but I am informed that the service is exceedingly short, and unattended with any pomp of ceremony. It is a doctrine with the Vril-ya, that earnest devotion or complete abstraction from the actual world cannot, with benefit to itself, be maintained long at a stretch by the human mind, especially in public, and that all attempts to do so either lead to fanaticism or to hypocrisy. When they pray in private, it is when they are alone or with their young children.

They say that in ancient times there was a great number of books written upon speculations as to the nature of the Deity, and upon the forms of belief or worship supposed to be most agreeable to Him. But these were found to lead to such heated and angry disputations as

not only to shake the peace of the community and divide families before the most united, but in the course of discussing the attributes of the Deity, the existence of the Deity Himself became argued away, or, what was worse, became invested with the passions and infirmities of the human disputants. "For," said my host, "since a finite being like an An cannot possibly define the Infinite, so, when he endeavors to realize an idea of the Divinity, he only reduces the Divinity into an An like himself." During the later ages, therefore, all theological speculations, though not forbidden, have been so discouraged as to have fallen utterly into disuse.

The Vrilya unite in a conviction of a future state, more felicitous and more perfect than the present. If they have very vague notions of the doctrine of rewards and punishments, it is perhaps because they have no systems of rewards and punishments among themselves, for there are no crimes to punish, and their moral standard is so even that no An among them is, upon the whole, considered more virtuous than another. If one excels, perhaps, in one virtue, another equally excels in some other virtue; if one has his prevalent fault or infirmity, so also another has his. In fact, in their extraordinary mode of life, there are so few temptations to wrong, that they are good (according to their notions of goodness) merely because they live. They have some fanciful notions upon the continuance of life, when once bestowed, even in the vegetable world, as the reader will see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THOUGH, as I have said, the Vrilya discourage all speculations on the nature of the Supreme Being, they appear to concur in a belief by which they think to solve that great problem of the existence of evil which has so perplexed the philosophy of the upper world. They hold that wherever He has once given life, with the perceptions of that life, however faint it be, as in a plant, the life is never destroyed; it passes into new and improved forms, though not in this planet (differing therein from the ordinary doctrine of metempsychosis), and that the living thing retains the sense of identity, so that

it connects its past life with its future, and is *conscious* of its progressive improvement in the scale of joy. For they say that, without this assumption, they cannot, according to the lights of human reason vouchsafed to them, discover the perfect justice which must be a constituent quality of the All-Wise and the All-Good. Injustice, they say, can only emanate from three causes: want of wisdom to perceive what is just, want of benevolence to desire, want of power to fulfil it; and that each of these three wants is incompatible in the All-Wise, the All-Good, the All-Powerful—but that, while even in this life the wisdom, the benevolence, and the power of the Supreme Being are sufficiently apparent to compel our recognition, the justice necessarily resulting from those attributes, absolutely requires another life, not for man only, but for every living thing of the inferior orders; that, alike in the animal and the vegetable world, we see one individual rendered, by circumstances beyond its control, exceedingly wretched compared to its neighbors—one only exists as the prey of another—even a plant suffers from disease till it perishes prematurely, while the plant next to it rejoices in its vitality and lives out its happy life free from a pang; that it is an erroneous analogy from human infirmities to reply by saying that the Supreme Being only acts, by general laws, thereby making his own secondary causes so potent as to mar the essential kindness of the First Cause; and a still meaner and more ignorant conception of the All-Good, to dismiss with a brief contempt all consideration of justice for the myriad forms into which He has infused life, and assume that justice is only due to the single product of the An. There is no small and no great in the eyes of the divine Life-Giver. But once grant that nothing, however humble, which feels that it lives and suffers, can perish through the series of ages, that all its suffering here, if continuous from the moment of its birth to that of its transfer to another form of being, would be more brief compared with eternity than the cry of the new-born is compared to the whole life of a man; and once suppose that this living thing retains its sense of identity when so transformed (for without that sense it could be aware of no future being), and though, indeed, the fulfilment of divine justice is removed from the scope of our ken, yet we have a right to assume it to be uni-

form and universal, and not varying and partial, as it would be if acting only upon general secondary laws; because such perfect justice flows of necessity from perfectness of knowledge to conceive, perfectness of love to will, and perfectness of power to complete it.

However fantastic this belief of the Vrilya may be, it tends perhaps to confirm politically the systems of government which, admitting differing degrees of wealth, yet establishes perfect equality in rank, exquisite mildness in all relations and intercourse, and tenderness to all created things which the good of the community does not require them to destroy. And though their notion of compensation to a tortured insect or a cankered flower may seem to some of us a very wild crotchet, yet, at least, it is not a mischievous one; and it may furnish matter for no unpleasing reflection to think that within the abysses of earth, never lit by a ray from the material heavens, there should have penetrated so luminous a conviction of the ineffable goodness of the Creator—so fixed an idea that the general laws by which He acts cannot admit of any partial injustice or evil, and therefore cannot be comprehended without reference to their action over all space and throughout all time. And since, as I shall have occasion to observe later, the intellectual conditions and social systems of this subterranean race comprise and harmonize great, and apparently antagonistic, varieties in philosophical doctrine and speculation which have from time to time been started, discussed, dismissed, and have reappeared amongst thinkers or dreamers in the upper world—so I may perhaps appropriately conclude this reference to the belief of the Vrilya, that self-conscious or sentient life once given is indestructible among inferior creatures as well as in man, by an eloquent passage from the work of that eminent zoölogist, Louis Agassiz, which I have only just met with, many years after I had committed to paper those recollections of the life of the Vrilya which I now reduce into something like arrangement and form: “The relations which individual animals bear to one another are of such a character that they ought long ago to have been considered as sufficient proof that no organized being could ever have been called into existence by other agency than by the direct intervention of a reflective mind. This argues strongly in favor of the existence in every

animal of an immaterial principle similar to that which by its excellence and superior endowments places man so much above animals; yet the principle unquestionably exists, and whether it be called sense, reason, or instinct, it presents in the whole range of organized beings a series of phenomena closely linked together, and upon it are based not only the higher manifestations of the mind, but the very permanence of the specific differences which characterize every organism. Most of the arguments in favor of the immortality of man apply equally to the permanency of this principle in other living beings. May I not add that a future life in which man would be deprived of that great source of enjoyment and intellectual and moral improvement which results from the contemplation of the harmonies of an organic world would involve a lamentable loss? And may we not look to a spiritual concert of the combined worlds and *all* their inhabitants in the presence of their Creator as the highest conception of paradise?"—"*Essay on Classification*," sect. xvii., p. 97-99.

CHAPTER XV

KIND to me as I found all in this household, the young daughter of my host was the most considerate and thoughtful in her kindness. At her suggestion I laid aside the habiliments in which I had descended from the upper earth, and adopted the dress of the Vrilya, with the exception of the artful wings which served them, when on foot, as a graceful mantle. But as many of the Vrilya, when occupied in urban pursuits, did not wear these wings, this exception created no marked difference between myself and the race among which I sojourned, and I was thus enabled to visit the town without exciting unpleasant curiosity. Out of the household no one suspected that I had come from the upper world, and I was but regarded as one of some inferior and barbarous tribe whom Aph-Lin entertained as a guest.

The city was large in proportion to the territory round it, which was of no greater extent than many an English or Hungarian nobleman's estate; but the whole of it, to the verge of the rocks which constituted its boundary, was cultivated to the nicest degree, except where certain

allotments of mountain and pasture were humanely left free to the sustenance of the harmless animals they had tamed, though not for domestic use. So great is their kindness toward these humble creatures, that a sum is devoted from the public treasury for the purpose of deporting them to other Vril-ya communities willing to receive them (chiefly new colonies), whenever they become too numerous for the pastures allotted to them in their native place. They do not, however, multiply to an extent comparable to the ratio at which, with us, animals bred for slaughter, increase. It seems a law of nature that animals not useful to man gradually recede from the domains he occupies, or even become extinct. It is an old custom of the various sovereign states amidst which the race of the Vril-ya are distributed, to leave between each state a neutral and uncultivated borderland. In the instance of the community I speak of, this tract, being a ridge of savage rocks, was impassable by foot, but was easily surmounted, whether by the wings of the inhabitants or the air-boats, of which I shall speak hereafter. Roads through it were also cut for the transit of vehicles impelled by vril. These intercommunicating tracts were always kept lighted, and the expense thereof defrayed by a special tax, to which all the communities comprehended in the denomination of Vril-ya contribute in settled proportions. By these means a considerable commercial traffic with other states, both near and distant, was carried on. The surplus wealth of this special community was chiefly agricultural. The community was also eminent for skill in constructing implements connected with the arts of husbandry. In exchange for such merchandise it obtained articles more of luxury than necessity. There were few things imported on which they set a higher price than birds taught to pipe artful tunes in concert. These were brought from a great distance, and were marvellous for beauty of song and plumage. I understand that extraordinary care was taken by their breeders and teachers in selection, and that the species had wonderfully improved during the last few years. I saw no other pet animals among this community except some very amusing and sportive creatures of the Batrachian species, resembling frogs, but with very intelligent countenances, which the children were fond of, and kept in their private gardens.

They appear to have no animals akin to our dogs or horses, though that learned naturalist, Zee, informed me that such creatures had once existed in those parts, and might now be found in regions inhabited by other races than the Vril-ya. She said that they had gradually disappeared from the more civilized world since the discovery of vril, and the results attending that discovery had dispensed with their uses. Machinery and the invention of wings had superseded the horse as a beast of burden; and the dog was no longer wanted either for protection or the chase, as it had been when the ancestors of the Vril-ya feared the aggressions of their own kind, or hunted the lesser animals for food. Indeed, however, so far as the horse was concerned, this region was so rocky that a horse could have been, there, of little use either for pastime or burden. The only creature they use for the latter purpose is a kind of large goat which is much employed on farms. The nature of the surrounding soil in these districts may be said to have first suggested the invention of wings and air-boats. The largeness of space in proportion to the space occupied by the city, was occasioned by the custom of surrounding every house with a separate garden. The broad main street, in which Aph-Lin dwelt, expanded into a vast square, in which were placed the College of Sages and all the public offices; a magnificent fountain of the luminous fluid which I call naphtha (I am ignorant of its real nature) in the centre. All these public edifices have a uniform character of massiveness and solidity. They reminded me of the architectural pictures of Martin. Along the upper stories of each ran a balcony, or rather a terraced garden, supported by columns, filled with flowering-plants, and tenanted by many kinds of tame birds. From the square branched several streets, all broad and brilliantly lighted, and ascending up the eminence on either side. In my excursions in the town I was never allowed to go alone; Aph-Lin or his daughter was my habitual companion. In this community the adult Gy is seen walking with any young An as familiarly as if there were no difference of sex.

The retail shops are not very numerous; the persons who attend on a customer are all children of various ages, and exceedingly intelligent and courteous, but without the least touch of importunity or cringing. The

shopkeeper himself might or might not be visible; when visible, he seemed rarely employed on any matter connected with his professional business; and yet he had taken to that business from special liking to it, and quite independently of his general sources of fortune.

Some of the richest citizens in the community kept such shops. As I have before said, no difference of rank is recognizable, and therefore all occupations hold the same equal social status. An An, of whom I bought my sandals, was the brother of the Tur, or chief magistrate; and though his shop was not larger than that of any bootmaker in Bond Street or Broadway, he was said to be twice as rich as the Tur who dwelt in a palace. No doubt, however, he had some country-seat.

The Ana of the community are, on the whole, an indolent set of beings after the active age of childhood. Whether by temperament or philosophy, they rank repose among the chief blessings of life. Indeed, when you take away from a human being the incentives to action which are found in cupidity or ambition, it seems to me no wonder that he rests quiet.

In their ordinary movements they prefer the use of their feet to that of their wings. But for their sports or (to indulge in a bold misuse of terms) their public *promenades*, they employ the latter, also for the aerial dances I have described, as well as for visiting their country-places, which are mostly placed on lofty heights; and, when still young, they prefer their wings for travel into the other regions of the Ana, to vehicular conveyances.

Those who accustom themselves to flight can fly, if less rapidly than some birds, yet from twenty-five to thirty miles an hour, and keep up that rate for five or six hours at a stretch. But the Ana generally, on reaching middle age, are not fond of rapid movements requiring violent exercise. Perhaps for this reason, as they hold a doctrine which our own physicians will doubtless approve, viz., that regular transpiration through the pores of the skin is essential to health, they habitually use the sweating-baths to which we give the name of Turkish or Roman, succeeded by douches of perfumed waters. They have great faith in the salubrious virtue of certain perfumes.

It is their custom also, at stated but rare periods, perhaps four times a year when in health, to use a bath

charged with *vril*.* They consider that this fluid, sparingly used, is a great sustainer of life; but used in excess, when in the normal state of health, rather tends to reaction and exhausted vitality. For nearly all their diseases, however, they resort to it as the chief assistant to nature in throwing off the complaint.

In their own way they are the most luxurious of people, but all their luxuries are innocent. They may be said to dwell in an atmosphere of music and fragrance. Every room has its mechanical contrivances for melodious sounds, usually tuned down to soft-murmured notes, which seem like sweet whispers from invisible spirits. They are too accustomed to these gentle sounds to find them a hindrance to conversation, nor, when alone, to reflection. But they have a notion that to breathe an air filled with continuous melody and perfume has necessarily an effect at once soothing and elevating upon the formation of character and the habits of thought. Though so temperate, and with total abstinence from other animal food than milk, and from all intoxicating drinks, they are delicate and dainty to an extreme in food and beverage; and in all their sports even the old exhibit a child-like gayety. Happiness is the end at which they aim, not as the excitement of a moment, but as the prevailing condition of the entire existence; and regard for the happiness of each other is evinced by the exquisite amenity of their manners.

Their conformation of skull has marked differences from that of any known races in the upper world, though I cannot help thinking it a development, in the course of countless ages, of the Brachycephalic type of the Age of Stone in Lyell's "*Elements of Geology*," C. X., p. 113, as compared with the Dolichocephalic type of the beginning of the Age of Iron, correspondent with that now so prevalent amongst us, and called the Celtic type. It has the same comparative massiveness of forehead, not receding like the Celtic—the same even roundness in the frontal organs; but it is far loftier in the apex, and far less pronounced in the hinder cranial hemisphere where phre-

* I once tried the effect of the *vril* bath. It was very similar in its invigorating powers to that of the baths at Gastein, the virtues of which are ascribed by many physicians to electricity; but though similar, the effect of the *vril* bath was more lasting.

nologists place the animal organs. To speak as a phrenologist, the cranium common to the Vrilya has the organs of weight, number, tune, form, order, casuality, very largely developed; that of construction much more pronounced than that of ideality. Those which are called the moral organs, such as conscientiousness and benevolence, are amazingly full; amativeness and combativeness are both small; adhesiveness large; the organ of destructiveness (*i.e.*, of determined clearance of intervening obstacles) immense, but less than that of benevolence; and their philoprogenitiveness takes rather the character of compassion and tenderness to things that need aid or protection than of the animal love of offspring. I never met with one person deformed or misshapen. The beauty of their countenances is not only in symmetry of feature, but in a smoothness of surface, which continues without line or wrinkle to the extreme of old age, and a serene sweetness of expression, combined with that majesty which seems to come from consciousness of power and the freedom of all terror, physical or moral. It is that very sweetness, combined with that majesty, which inspired in a beholder like myself, accustomed to strive with the passions of mankind, a sentiment of humiliation, of awe, of dread. It is such an expression as a painter might give to a demi-god, a genius, an angel. The males of the Vrilya are entirely beardless; the Gy-ei sometimes, in old age, develop a small mustache.

I was surprised to find that the color of their skin was not uniformly that which I had remarked in those individuals whom I had first encountered, some being much fairer, and even with blue eyes, and hair of a deep golden auburn, though still of complexions warmer or richer in tone than persons in the north of Europe.

I was told that this admixture of coloring arose from intermarriage with other and more distant tribes of the Vrilya, who, whether by the accident of climate or early distinction of race, were of fairer hues than the tribes of which this community formed one. It was considered that the dark-red skin showed the most ancient family of Ana; but they attached no sentiment of pride to that antiquity, and, on the contrary, believed their present excellence of breed came from frequent crossing with other families differing, yet akin; and they encourage such intermarriages, always provided that it be with the Vrilya

nations. Nations which, not conforming their manners and institutions to those of the Vrilya, nor indeed held capable of acquiring the powers over the vril agencies which it had taken them generations to attain and transmit, were regarded with more disdain than citizens of New York regard the negroes.

I learned from Zee, who had more lore in all matters than any male with whom I was brought into familiar converse, that the superiority of the Vrilya was supposed to have originated in the intensity of their earlier struggles against obstacles in nature amidst the localities in which they had first settled. "Wherever," said Zee, moralizing, "wherever goes on that early process in the history of civilization, by which life is made a struggle, in which the individual has to put forth all his powers to compete with his fellow, we invariably find this result—viz., since in the competition a vast number must perish, nature selects for preservation only the strongest specimens. With our race, therefore, even before the discovery of vril, only the highest organizations were preserved; and there is among our ancient books a legend, once popularly believed, that we were driven from a region that seems to denote the world you come from, in order to perfect our condition and attain to the purest elimination of our species by the severity of the struggles our forefathers underwent; and that, when our education shall become finally completed, we are destined to return to the upper world, and supplant all the inferior races now existing therein."

Aph-Lin and Zee often conversed with me in private upon the political and social conditions of that upper world, in which Zee so philosophically assumed that the inhabitants were to be exterminated one day or other by the advent of the Vrilya. They found in my accounts—in which I continued to do all I could (without launching into falsehoods so positive that they would have been easily detected by the shrewdness of my listeners) to present our powers and ourselves in the most flattering point of view—perpetual subjects of comparison between our most civilized populations and the meaner subterranean races which they considered hopelessly plunged in barbarism, and doomed to gradual if certain extinction. But they both agreed in desiring to conceal from their community all premature opening into the

regions lighted by the sun; both were humane, and shrunk from the thought of annihilating so many millions of creatures; and the pictures I drew of our life, highly colored as they were, saddened them. In vain I boasted of our great men—poets, philosophers, orators, generals—and defied the Vrilya to produce their equals. “Alas!” said Zee, her grand face softening into an angel-like compassion, “this predominance of the few over the many is the surest and most fatal sign of a race incorrigibly savage. See you not that the primary condition of mortal happiness consists in the extinction of that strife and competition between individuals, which, no matter what forms of government they adopt, render the many subordinate to the few, destroy real liberty to the individual, whatever may be the nominal liberty of the state, and annul that calm of existence, without which, felicity, mental or bodily, cannot be attained? Our notion is, that the more we can assimilate life to the existence which our noblest ideas can conceive to be that of spirits on the other side of the grave, why, the more we approximate to a divine happiness here, and the more easily we glide into the conditions of being hereafter. For, surely, all we can imagine of the life of gods, or of blessed immortals, supposes the absence of self-made cares and contentious passions, such as avarice and ambition. It seems to us that it must be a life of serene tranquillity, not indeed without active occupations to the intellectual or spiritual powers, but occupations, of whatsoever nature they be, congenial to the idiosyncrasies of each, not forced and repugnant—a life gladdened by the untrammelled interchange of gentle affections, in which the moral atmosphere utterly kills hate and vengeance, and strife and rivalry. Such is the political state to which all the tribes and families of the Vrilya seek to attain, and toward that goal all our theories of government are shaped. You see how utterly opposed is such a progress to that of the uncivilized nations from which you come, and which aim at a systematic perpetuity of troubles, and cares, and warring passions, aggravated more and more as their progress storms its way onward. The most powerful of all the races in our world, beyond the pale of the Vrilya, esteems itself the best governed of all political societies, and to have reached in that respect the extreme end at which polit-

ical wisdom can arrive, so that the other nations should tend more or less to copy it. It has established, on its broadest base, the Koom-Posh—viz., the government of the ignorant upon the principle of being the most numerous. It has placed the supreme bliss in the vying with each other in all things, so that the evil passions are never in repose—vying for power, for wealth, for eminence of some kind; and in this rivalry it is horrible to hear the vituperation, the slanders and calumnies which even the best and mildest among them heap on each other without remorse or shame."

"Some years ago," said Aph-Lin, "I visited this people, and their misery and degradation were the more appalling because they were always boasting of their felicity and grandeur as compared with the rest of their species. And there is no hope that this people, which evidently resembles your own, can improve, because all their notions tend to further deterioration. They desire to enlarge their dominion more and more, in direct antagonism to the truth that, beyond a very limited range, it is impossible to secure to a community the happiness which belongs to a well-ordered family; and the more they mature a system by which a few individuals are heated and swollen to a size above the standard slenderness of the millions, the more they chuckle and exact, and cry out, 'See by what great exceptions to the common littleness of our race we prove the magnificent results of our system!'"

"In fact," resumed Zee, "if the wisdom of human life be to approximate to the serene equality of immortals, there can be no more direct flying off into the opposite direction than a system which aims at carrying to the utmost the inequalities and turbulences of mortals. Nor do I see how, by any forms of religious belief, mortals, so acting, could fit themselves even to appreciate the joys of immortals to which they still expect to be transferred by the mere act of dying. On the contrary, minds accustomed to place happiness in things so much the reverse of godlike, would find the happiness of gods exceedingly dull, and would long to get back to a world in which they could quarrel with each other."

CHAPTER XVI.

I HAVE spoken so much of the Vríl Staff that my reader may expect me to describe it. This I cannot do accurately, for I was never allowed to handle it for fear of some terrible accident occasioned by my ignorance of its use; and I have no doubt that it requires much skill and practice in the exercise of its various powers. It is hollow, and has in the handle several stops, keys, or springs by which its force can be altered, modified, or directed—so that by one process it destroys, by another it heals—by one it can rend the rock, by another disperse the vapor—by one it affects bodies, by another it can exercise a certain influence over minds. It is usually carried in the convenient size of a walking-staff, but it has slides by which it can be lengthened or shortened at will. When used for special purposes, the upper part rests in the hollow of the palm with the fore and middle fingers protruded. I was assured, however, that its power was not equal in all, but proportioned to the amount of certain vríl properties in the wearer in affinity, or *rapport* with the purposes to be effected. Some were more potent to destroy, others to heal, etc.; much also depended on the calm and steadiness of volition in the manipulator. They assert that the full exercise of vríl power can only be acquired by constitutional temperament—*i.e.*, by hereditarily transmitted organization—and that a female infant of four years old belonging to the Vríl-ya races can accomplish feats with the wand placed for the first time in her hand, which a life spent in its practice would not enable the strongest and most skilled mechanician, born out of the pale of the Vríl-ya, to achieve. All these wands are not equally complicated; those intrusted to children are much simpler than those borne by sages of either sex, and constructed with a view to the special object in which the children are employed; which, as I have before said, is among the youngest children the most destructive. In the wands of wives and mothers the correlative destroying force is usually abstracted, the healing power fully charged. I wish I could say more in detail of this singular conductor of the vríl fluid, but its machinery is as exquisite as its effects are marvellous.

I should say, however, that this people have invented certain tubes by which the vril fluid can be conducted toward the object it is meant to destroy, throughout a distance almost indefinite; at least I put it modestly when I say from 500 to 600 miles. And their mathematical science as applied to such purpose is so nicely accurate, that on the report of some observer in an air-boat, any member of the vril department can estimate unerringly the nature of intervening obstacles, the height to which the projectile instrument should be raised, and the extent to which it should be charged, so as to reduce to ashes within a space of time too short for me to venture to specify it, a capital twice as vast as London.

Certainly these Ana are wonderful mechanics—wonderful for the adaptation of the inventive faculty to practical uses.

I went with my host and his daughter Zee over the great public museum, which occupies a wing in the College of Sages, and in which are hoarded, as curious specimens of the ignorant and blundering experiments of ancient times, many contrivances on which we pride ourselves as recent achievements. In one department, carelessly thrown aside as obsolete lumber, are tubes for destroying life by metallic balls and an inflammable powder, on the principle of our cannons and catapults, and even still more murderous than our latest improvements.

My host spoke of these with a smile of contempt, such as an artillery officer might bestow on the bows and arrows of the Chinese. In another department there were models of vehicles and vessels worked by steam, and of an air-balloon which might have been constructed by Montgolfier. "Such," said Zee, with an air of meditative wisdom—"such were the feeble triflings with nature of our savage forefathers, ere they had even a glimmering perception of the properties of vril!"

This young Gy was a magnificent specimen of the muscular force to which the females of her country attain. Her features were beautiful, like those of all her race; never in the upper world have I seen a face so grand and so faultless, but her devotion to the severer studies had given to her countenance an expression of abstract thought which rendered it somewhat stern when in repose; and such sternness became formidable when ob-

served in connection with her ample shoulders and lofty stature. She was tall even for a Gy, and I saw her lift up a cannon as easily as I could lift a pocket-pistol. Zee inspired me with a profound terror—a terror which increased when we came into a department of the museum appropriated to models of contrivances worked by the agency of vril; for here, merely by a certain play of her vril staff, she herself standing at a distance, she put into movement large and weighty substances. She seemed to endow them with intelligence, and to make them comprehend and obey her command. She set complicated pieces of machinery into movement, arrested the movement or continued it, until, within an incredibly short time, various kinds of raw material were reproduced as symmetrical works of art, complete and perfect. Whatever effect mesmerism or electro-biology produces over the nerves and muscles of animated objects, this young Gy produced by the motions of her slender rod over the springs and wheels of lifeless mechanism.

When I mentioned to my companions my astonishment at this influence over inanimate matter—while owning that, in our world, I had witnessed phenomena which showed that over certain living organizations certain other living organizations could establish an influence genuine in itself, but often exaggerated by credulity or craft—Zee, who was more interested in such subjects than her father, bade me stretch forth my hand, and then, placing beside it her own, she called my attention to certain distinctions of type and character. In the first place, the thumb of the Gy (and, as I afterward noticed, of all that race, male or female) was much larger, at once longer and more massive, than is found with our species above ground. There is almost, in this, as great a difference as there is between the thumb of a man and that of a gorilla. Secondly, the palm is proportionally thicker than ours—the texture of the skin infinitely finer and softer—its average warmth is greater. More remarkable than all this is a visible nerve, perceptible under the skin, which starts from the wrist, skirting the ball of the thumb, and branching, fork-like, at the roots of the fore and middle fingers. “With your slight formation of thumb,” said the philosophical young Gy, “and with the absence of the nerve which you find more or less developed in the hands of our race, you can never achieve

other than imperfect and feeble power over the agency of vril; but so far as the nerve is concerned, that is not found in the hands of our earliest progenitors, nor in those of the ruder tribes without the pale of the Vril-ya. It has been slowly developed in the course of generations, commencing in the early achievements, and increasing with the continuous exercise, of the vril power; therefore, in the course of one or two thousand years, such a nerve may possibly be engendered in those higher beings of your race, who devote themselves to that paramount science through which is attained command over all the subtler forces of nature permeated by vril. But when you talk of matter as something in itself inert and motionless, your parents or tutors surely cannot have left you so ignorant as not to know that no form of matter is motionless and inert: every particle is constantly in motion and constantly acted upon by agencies, of which heat is the most apparent and rapid, but vril the most subtle, and, when skilfully wielded, the most powerful. So that, in fact, the current launched by my hand and guided by my will does but render quicker and more potent the action which is eternally at work upon every particle of matter, however inert and stubborn it may seem. If a heap of metal be not capable of originating a thought of its own, yet, through its internal susceptibility to movement, it obtains the power to receive the thought of the intellectual agent at work on it; and which, when conveyed with a sufficient force of the vril power, it is as much compelled to obey as if it were displaced by a visible bodily force. It is animated for the time being by the soul thus infused into it, so that one may almost say that it lives and it reasons. Without this we could not make our automata supply the place of servants."

I was too much in awe of the thews and the learning of the young Gy to hazard the risk of arguing with her. I had read somewhere in my school-boy days that a wise man, disputing with a Roman emperor, suddenly drew in his horns; and when the emperor asked him whether he had nothing further to say on his side of the question, replied, "Nay, Cæsar, there is no arguing against a reasoner who commands ten legions."

Though I had a secret persuasion that, whatever the real effects of vril upon matter, Mr. Faraday could have

proved her a very shallow philosopher as to its extent or its causes, I had no doubt that Zee could have brained all the Fellows of the Royal Society, one after the other, with a blow of her fist. Every sensible man knows that it is useless to argue with any ordinary female upon matters he comprehends; but to argue with a Gy seven feet high upon the mysteries of vril—as well argue in a desert, and with a simoom!

Amid the various departments to which the vast building of the College of Sages was appropriated, that which interested me most was devoted to the archæology of the Vril-ya, and comprised a very ancient collection of portraits. In these the pigments and groundwork employed were of so durable a nature that even pictures said to be executed at dates as remote as those in the earliest annals of the Chinese, retained much freshness of color. In examining this collection, two things especially struck me:—1st, That the pictures said to be between 6000 and 7000 years old were of a much higher degree of art than any produced within the last 3000 or 4000 years; and, 2d, That the portraits within the former period much more resembled our own upper world and European types of countenance. Some of them, indeed, remind me of the Italian heads which look out from the canvas of Titian—speaking of ambition or craft, of care or of grief, with furrows in which the passions have passed with iron ploughshare. These were the countenances of men who had lived in struggle and conflict before the discovery of the latent forces of vril had changed the character of society—men who had fought with each other for power or fame as we in the upper world fight.

The type of face began to evince a marked change about a thousand years after the vril revolution, becoming then, with each generation, more serene, and in that serenity more terribly distinct from the faces of laboring and sinful men; while in proportion as the beauty and the grandeur of the countenance itself became more fully developed, the art of the painter became more tame and monotonous.

But the greatest curiosity in the collection was that of three portraits belonging to the prehistorical age, and, according to mythical tradition, taken by the orders of a philosopher, whose origin and attributes were as much

mixed up with symbolical fable as those of an Indian Budh or a Greek Prometheus.

From this mysterious personage, at once a sage and a hero, all the principal sections of the Vrilya race pretend to trace a common origin.

The portraits are of the philosopher himself, of his grandfather and great-grandfather. They are all at full length. The philosopher is attired in a long tunic which seems to form a loose suit of scaly armor, borrowed, perhaps, from some fish or reptile, but the feet and hands are exposed; the digits in both are wonderfully long and webbed. He has little or no perceptible throat, and a low receding forehead, not at all the ideal of a sage's. He has bright brown prominent eyes, a very wide mouth and high cheek-bones, and a muddy complexion. According to tradition, this philosopher had lived to a patriarchal age, extending over many centuries, and he remembered distinctly in middle life his grandfather as surviving, and in childhood his great-grandfather; the portrait of the first he had taken, or caused to be taken, while yet alive—that of the latter was taken from his effigies in mummy. The portrait of the grandfather had the features and aspect of the philosopher, only much more exaggerated; he was not dressed, and the color of his body was singular; the breast and stomach yellow, the shoulders and legs of a dull bronze hue: the great-grandfather was a magnificent specimen of the Batrachian genus, a Giant Frog, *pur et simple*.

Among the pithy sayings which, according to tradition, the philosopher bequeathed to posterity in rhythmical form and sententious brevity, this is notably recorded: "Humble yourselves, my descendants; the father of your race was a *twat* (tadpole): exalt yourselves, my descendants, for it was the same Divine Thought which created your father that develops itself in exalting you."

Aph-Lin told me this fable while I gazed on the three Batrachian portraits. I said in reply: "You make a jest of my supposed ignorance and credulity as an uneducated Tish, but though these horrible daubs may be of great antiquity, and were intended, perhaps, for some rude caricature, I presume that none of your race, even in the less enlightened ages, ever believed that the great-

grandson of a Frog became a sententious philosopher; or that any section, I will not say of the lofty Vrilya, but of the meanest varieties of the human race, had its origin in a Tadpole."

"Pardon me," answered Aph-Lin: "in what we call the Wrangling or Philosophical Period of History, which was at its height about seven thousand years ago, there was a very distinguished naturalist, who proved to the satisfaction of numerous disciples such analogical and anatomical agreements in structure between an An and a Frog, as to show that out of the one must have developed the other. They had some diseases in common; they were both subject to the same parasitical worms in the intestines; and, strange to say, the An has, in his structure, a swimming-bladder, no longer of any use to him, but which is a rudiment that clearly proves his descent from a Frog. Nor is there any argument against this theory to be found in the relative difference of size, for there are still existent in our world Frogs of a size and stature not inferior to our own, and many thousand years ago they appear to have been still larger."

"I understand that," said I, "because Frogs thus enormous are, according to our eminent geologists, who perhaps saw them in dreams, said to have been distinguished inhabitants of the upper world before the Deluge; and such Frogs are exactly the creatures likely to have flourished in the lakes and morasses of your subterranean regions. But pray, proceed."

"In the Wrangling Period of History, whatever one sage asserted another sage was sure to contradict. In fact, it was a maxim in that age, that the human reason could only be sustained aloft by being tossed to and fro in the perpetual motion of contradiction; and therefore another set of philosophers maintained the doctrine that the An was not the descendant of the Frog, but that the Frog was clearly the improved development of the An. The shape of the Frog, taken generally, was much more symmetrical than that of An; besides the beautiful conformation of its lower limbs, its flanks and shoulders, the majority of the Ana in that day were almost deformed, and certainly ill-shaped. Again, the Frog had the power to live alike on land and in water—a mighty privilege, partaking of a spiritual essence denied to the An, since the disuse of his swimming-bladder clearly

proves his degeneration from a higher development of species. Again, the earlier races of the Ana seem to have been covered with hair, and, even to a comparatively recent date, hirsute bushes deformed the very faces of our ancestors, spreading wild over their cheeks and chins, as similar bushes, my poor Tish, spread wild over yours. But the object of the higher races of the Ana through countless generations has been to erase all vestige of connection with hairy vertebrata, and they have gradually eliminated that debasing capillary excrement by the law of sexual selection; the Gy-ei naturally preferring youth or the beauty of smooth faces. But the degree of the Frog in the scale of the vertebrata is shown in this, that he has no hair at all, not even on his head. He was born to that hairless perfection which the most beautiful of the Ana, despite the culture of incalculable ages, have not yet attained. The wonderful complication and delicacy of a Frog's nervous system and arterial circulation were shown by this school to be more susceptible of enjoyment than our inferior, or at least simpler, physical frame allows us to be. The examination of a Frog's hand, if I may use that expression, accounted for its keener susceptibility to love, and to social life in general. In fact, gregarious and amatory as are the Ana, Frogs are still more so. In short, these two schools raged against each other; one asserting the An to be the perfected type of the Frog; the other that the Frog was the highest development of the An. The moralists were divided in opinion with the naturalists, but the bulk of them sided with the Frog preference school. They said, with much plausibility, that in moral conduct (viz., in the adherence to rules best adapted to the health and welfare of the individual and the community) there could be no doubt of the vast superiority of the Frog. All history showed the wholesale immorality of the human race, the complete disregard, even by the most renowned amongst them, of the laws which they acknowledged to be essential to their own and the general happiness and well-being. But the severest critic of the Frog race could not detect in their manners a single aberration from the moral law tacitly recognized by themselves. And what, after all, can be the profit of civilization if superiority in moral conduct be not the aim for

which it strives, and the test by which its progress should be judged?

"In fine, the adherents to this theory presumed that in some remote period the Frog race had been the improved development of the Human; but that, from some causes which defied rational conjecture, they had not maintained their original position in the scale of nature; while the Ana, though of inferior organization, had, by dint less of their virtues than their vices, such as ferocity and cunning, gradually acquired ascendancy, much as among the human race itself tribes utterly barbarous have, by superiority in similar vices, utterly destroyed or reduced into insignificance tribes originally excelling them in mental gifts and culture. Unhappily these disputes became involved with the religious notions of that age; and as society was then administered under the government of the Koom-Posh—who, being the most ignorant, were of course the most inflammable class—the multitude took the whole question out of the hands of the philosophers; political chiefs saw that the Frog dispute, so taken up by the populace, could become a most valuable instrument of their ambition; and for not less than one thousand years war and massacre prevailed, during which period the philosophers on both sides were butchered, and the government of the Koom-Posh itself was happily brought to an end by the ascendancy of a family that clearly established its descent from the aboriginal tadpole, and furnished despotic rulers to the various nations of the Ana. These despots finally disappeared, at least from our communities, as the discovery of vril led to the tranquil institutions under which flourish all the races of the Vril-ya."

"And do no wranglers or philosophers now exist to revive the dispute; or do they all recognize the origin of your race in the tadpole?"

"Nay, such disputes," said Zee, with a lofty smile, "belong to the Pah-bodh of the dark ages, and now only serve for the amusement of infants. When we know the elements out of which our bodies are composed, elements common to the humblest vegetable plants, can it signify whether the All-Wise combined those elements out of one form more than another, in order to create that in which He has placed the capacity to receive the idea of

Himself, and all the varied grandeurs of intellect to which that idea gives birth? The An in reality commenced to exist as An with the donation of that capacity, and, with that capacity, the sense to acknowledge that, however through the countless ages his race may improve in wisdom, it can never combine the elements at its command into the form of a tadpole."

"You speak well, Zee," said Aph-Lin; "and it is enough for us short-lived mortals to feel a reasonable assurance that whether the origin of the An was a tadpole or not, he is no more likely to become a tadpole again than the institutions of the Vril-ya are likely to relapse into the heaving quagmire and certain strife-rôt of a Koom-Posh."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Vril-ya, being excluded from all sight of the heavenly bodies, and having no other difference between night and day than that which they deem it convenient to make for themselves, do not, of course, arrive at their divisions of time by the same process that we do; but I found it easy, by the aid of my watch, which I luckily had about me, to compute their time with great nicety. I reserve for a future work on the science and literature of the Vril-ya, should I live to complete it, all details as to the manner in which they arrive at their rotation of time; and content myself here with saying, that in point of duration, their year differs very slightly from ours, but that the divisions of their year are by no means the same. Their day (including what we call night) consists of twenty hours of our time, instead of twenty-four, and of course their year comprises the correspondent increase in the number of days by which it is summed up. They subdivide the twenty hours of their day thus: eight hours,* called the "Silent Hours," for repose; eight hours, called the "Earnest Time," for the pursuits and occupations of life; and four hours, called the "Easy Time" (with which what I may term their day closes),

* For the sake of convenience, I adopt the words hours, days, years, etc., in any general reference to subdivisions of time among the Vril-ya—those terms but loosely corresponding, however, with such subdivisions.

allotted to festivities, sport, recreation, or family converse, according to their several tastes and inclinations. But, in truth, out-of-doors there is no night. They maintain, both in the streets and in the surrounding country, to the limits of their territory, the same degree of light at all hours. Only, within-doors, they lower it to a soft twilight during the Silent Hours. They have a great horror of perfect darkness, and their lights are never wholly extinguished. On occasions of festivity they continue the duration of full light, but equally keep note of the distinction between night and day, by mechanical contrivances which answer the purpose of our clocks and watches. They are very fond of music; and it is by music that these chronometers strike the principal division of time. At every one of their hours, during their day, the sounds coming from all the time-pieces in their public buildings, and caught up, as it were, by those of houses or hamlets scattered amidst the landscapes without the city, have an effect singularly sweet, and yet singularly solemn. But during the Silent Hours these sounds are so subdued as to be only faintly heard by a waking ear. They have no change of seasons, and, at least on the territory of this tribe, the atmosphere seemed to me very equable, warm as that of an Italian summer, and humid rather than dry; in the forenoon usually very still, but at times invaded by strong blasts from the rocks that made the borders of their domain. But time is the same to them for sowing or reaping as in the Golden Isles of the ancient poets. At the same moment you see the younger plants in blade or bud, the older in ear or fruit. All fruit-bearing plants, however, after fruitage, either shed or change the color of their leaves. But that which interested me most in reckoning up their divisions of time was the ascertainment of the average duration of life amongst them. I found on minute inquiry that this very considerably exceeded the term allotted to us on the upper earth. What seventy years are to us, one hundred years are to them. Nor is this the only advantage they have over us in longevity, for as few among us attain to the age of seventy, so, on the contrary, few among them die before the age of one hundred; and they enjoy a general degree of health and vigor which makes life itself a blessing even to the last. Various causes contribute to

this result: the absence of all alcoholic stimulants; temperance in food; more especially, perhaps, a serenity of mind undisturbed by anxious occupations and eager passions. They are not tormented by our avarice or our ambition; they appear perfectly indifferent even to the desire of fame; they are capable of great affection, but their love shows itself in a tender and cheerful complaisance, and, while forming their happiness, seems rarely, if ever, to constitute their woe. As the Gy is sure only to marry where she herself fixes her choice, and as here, not less than above ground, it is the female on whom the happiness of home depends; so the Gy, having chosen the mate she prefers to all others, is lenient to his faults, consults his humors, and does her best to secure his attachment. The death of a beloved one is of course with them, as with us, a cause of sorrow; but not only is death with them so much more rare before that age in which it becomes a release, but when it does occur the survivor takes much more consolation than, I am afraid, the generality of us do, in the certainty of reunion in another and yet happier life.

All these cases, then, concur to their healthful and enjoyable longevity, though, no doubt, much also must be owing to hereditary organization. According to their records, however, in those earlier stages of their society when they lived in communities resembling ours, agitated by fierce competition, their lives were considerably shorter, and their maladies more numerous and grave. They themselves say that the duration of life, too, has increased, and is still on the increase, since their discovery of the invigorating and medicinal properties of *vril*, applied for remedial purposes. They have few professional and regular practitioners of medicine, and ~~these~~ are chiefly Gy-ei, who, especially if widowed and childless, find great delight in the healing art, and even undertake surgical operations in those cases required by accident, or, more rarely, by disease.

They have their diversions and entertainments, and, during the Easy Time of their day, they are wont to assemble in great numbers for those winged sports in the air which I have already described. They have also public halls for music, and even theatres, at which are performed pieces that appeared to me somewhat to resemble the plays of the Chinese—dramas that are thrown back

into distant times for their events and personages, in which all classic unities are outrageously violated, and the hero, in one scene a child, in the next is an old man, and so forth. These plays are of very ancient composition, and their stories cast in remote times. They appeared to me very dull, on the whole, but were relieved by startling mechanical contrivances, and a kind of farcical broad humor, and detached passages of great vigor and power expressed in language highly poetical, but somewhat overcharged with metaphor and trope. In fine, they seemed to me very much what the plays of Shakespeare seemed to a Parisian in the time of Louis XV., or perhaps to an Englishman in the reign of Charles II.

The audience, of which the Gy-ei constituted the chief portion, appeared to enjoy greatly the representation of these dramas, which, for so sedate and majestic a race of females, surprised me, till I observed that all the performers were under the age of adolescence, and conjectured truly that the mothers and sisters came to please their children and brothers.

I have said that these dramas are of great antiquity. No new plays, indeed no imaginative works sufficiently important to survive their immediate day, appear to have been composed for several generations. In fact, though there is no lack of new publications, and they have even what may be called newspapers, these are chiefly devoted to mechanical science, reports of new inventions, announcements respecting various details of business—in short, to practical matters. Sometimes a child writes a little tale of adventure, or a young Gy vents her amorous hopes or fears in a poem; but these effusions are of very little merit, and are seldom read except by children and maiden Gy-ei. The most interesting works of a purely literary character are those of explorations and travels into other regions of this nether world, which are generally written by young emigrants, and are read with great avidity by the relations and friends they have left behind.

I could not help expressing to Aph-Lin my surprise that a community in which mechanical science had made so marvellous a progress, and in which intellectual civilization had exhibited itself in realizing those objects for the happiness of the people, which the political philosophers above ground had, after ages of struggle, pretty

generally agreed to consider unattainable visions, should, nevertheless, be so wholly without a contemporaneous literature, despite the excellence to which culture had brought a language at once rich and simple, vigorous and musical.

My host replied—"Do you not perceive that a literature such as you mean would be wholly incompatible with that perfection of social or political felicity at which you do us the honor to think we have arrived? We have at last, after centuries of struggle, settled into a form of government with which we are content, and in which, as we allow no differences of rank, and no honors are paid to administrators distinguishing them from others, there is no stimulus given to individual ambition. No one would read works advocating theories that involved any political or social change, and therefore no one writes them. If now and then an An feels himself dissatisfied with our tranquil mode of life, he does not attack it; he goes away. Thus all that part of literature (and, to judge by the ancient books in our public libraries, it was once a very large part) which relates to speculative theories on society is become utterly extinct. Again, formerly there was a vast deal written respecting the attributes and essence of the All-Good, and the arguments for and against a future state; but now we all recognize two facts—that there *is* a Divine Being, and there *is* a future state—and we all equally agree that if we wrote our fingers to the bone, we could not throw any light upon the nature and conditions of that future state, or quicken our apprehensions of the attributes and essence of that Divine Being. Thus another part of literature has become also extinct, happily for our race; for in the times when so much was written upon subjects which no one could determine, people seemed to live in a perpetual state of quarrel and contention. So, too, a vast part of our ancient literature consists of historical records of wars and revolutions during the times when the Ana lived in large and turbulent societies, each seeking aggrandizement at the expense of the other. You see our serene mode of life now; such it has been for ages. We have no events to chronicle. What more of us can be said than that 'they were born, they were happy, they died?' Coming next to that part of literature which is more under the control of the imagination, such as what we

call Glaubsila, or colloquially 'Glaubs,' and you call poetry, the reasons for its decline amongst us are abundantly obvious.

"We find, by referring to the great masterpieces in that department of literature which we all still read with pleasure, but of which none would tolerate imitations, that they consist in the portraiture of passions which we no longer experience—ambition, vengeance, unhallowed love, the thirst for warlike renown, and suchlike. The old poets lived in an atmosphere impregnated with these passions, and felt vividly what they expressed glowingly. No one can express such passions now, for no one can feel them, or meet with any sympathy in his readers if he did. Again, the old poetry has a main element in its dissection of those complex mysteries of human character which conduce to abnormal vices and crimes, or lead to signal and extraordinary virtues. But our society, having got rid of temptations to any prominent vices and crimes, has necessarily rendered the moral average so equal, that there are no very salient virtues. Without its ancient food of strong passions, vast crimes, heroic excellences, poetry therefore is, if not actually starved to death, reduced to a very meagre diet. There is still the poetry of description—description of rocks, and trees, and waters, and common household life; and our young Gy-ei weave much of this insipid kind of composition into their love verses."

"Such poetry," said I, "might surely be made very charming; and we have critics amongst us who consider it a higher kind than that which depicts the crimes, or analyzes the passions, of man. At all events, poetry of the insipid kind you mention is a poetry that nowadays commands more readers than any other among the people I have left above ground."

"Possibly; but then I suppose the writers take great pains with the language they employ, and devote themselves to the culture and polish of words and rhythms as an art?"

"Certainly they do: all great poets must do that. Though the gift of poetry may be inborn, the gift requires as much care to make it available as a block of metal does to be made into one of your engines."

"And doubtless your poets have some incentive to bestow all those pains upon such verbal prettinesses?"

"Well, I presume their instinct of song would make them sing as the bird does; but to cultivate the song into verbal or artificial prettiness, probably does need an inducement from without, and our poets find it in the love of fame—perhaps, now and then, in the want of money."

"Precisely so. But in our society we attach fame to nothing which man, in that moment of his duration which is called "life," can perform. We should soon lose that equality which constitutes the felicitous essence of our commonwealth if we selected any individual for pre-eminent praise: pre-eminent praise would confer pre-eminent power, and the moment it were given, evil passions, now dormant, would awake; other men would immediately covet praise, then would arise envy, and with envy hate, and with hate calumny and persecution. Our history tells us that most of the poets and most of the writers who, in the old time, were favored with the greatest praise, were also assailed by the greatest vituperation, and even, on the whole, rendered very unhappy, partly by the attacks of jealous rivals, partly by the diseased mental constitution which an acquired sensitiveness to praise and to blame tends to engender. As for the stimulus of want; in the first place, no man in our community knows the goad of poverty; and, secondly, if he did, almost every occupation would be more lucrative than writing.

"Our public libraries contain all the books of the past which time has preserved; those books, for the reasons above stated, are infinitely better than any can write nowadays, and they are open to all to read without cost. We are not such fools as to pay for reading inferior books, when we can read superior books for nothing."

"With us, novelty has an attraction; and a new book, if bad, is read when an old book, though good, is neglected."

"Novelty, to barbarous states of society struggling in despair for something better, has no doubt an attraction, denied to us, who see nothing to gain in novelties; but after all, it is observed by one of our great authors four thousand years ago, that 'he who studies old books will always find in them something new, and he who reads new books will always find in them something old.' But to return to the question you have raised, there being then amongst us no stimulus to painstaking labor, whether in

desire of fame or in pressure of want, such as have the poetic temperament, no doubt, vent it in song, as you say the bird sings; but for lack of elaborate culture it fails of an audience, and, failing of an audience, dies out, of itself, amidst the ordinary avocations of life."

"But how is it that these discouragements to the cultivation of literature do not operate against that of science?"

"Your question amazes me. The motive to science is the love of truth apart from all consideration of fame, and science with us too is devoted almost solely to practical uses, essential to our social conversation and the comforts of our daily life. No fame is asked by the inventor, and none is given to him; he enjoys an occupation congenial to his tastes, and needing no wear and tear of the passions. Man must have exercise for his mind as well as body; and continuous exercise, rather than violent, is best for both. Our most ingenious cultivators of science are, as a general rule, the longest lived and the most free from disease. Painting is an amusement to many, but the art is not what it was in former times, when the great painters in our various communities vied with each other for the prize of a golden crown, which gave them a social rank equal to that of the kings under whom they lived. You will thus doubtless have observed in our archæological department how superior in point of art the pictures were several thousand years ago. Perhaps it is because music is, in reality, more allied to science than it is to poetry, that, of all the pleasurable arts, music is that which flourishes the most amongst us. Still, even in music the absence of stimulus in praise or fame has served to prevent any great superiority of one individual over another; and we rather excel in choral music, with the aid of our vast mechanical instruments, in which we make great use of the agency of water,* than in single performers. We have had scarcely any original composer for some ages. Our favorite airs are very ancient in substance, but have admitted many complicated variations by inferior, though ingenious, musicians."

* This may remind the student of Nero's invention of a musical machine, by which water was made to perform the part of an orchestra, and on which he was employed when the conspiracy against him broke out.

"Are there no political societies among the Ana which are animated by those passions, subjected to those crimes, and admitting those disparities in condition, in intellect, and in morality, which the state of your tribe, or indeed of the Vril-ya generally, has left behind in its progress to perfection? If so, among such societies perhaps Poetry and her sister arts still continue to be honored and to improve?"

"There are such societies in remote regions, but we do not admit them within the pale of civilized communities; we scarcely even give them the name of Ana, and certainly not that of Vril-ya. They are savages, living chiefly in that low stage of being, Koom-Posh, tending necessarily to its own hideous dissolution in Glek-Nas. Their wretched existence is passed in perpetual contest and perpetual change. When they do not fight with their neighbors, they fight among themselves. They are divided into sections, which abuse, plunder, and sometimes murder each other, and on the most frivolous points of difference that would be unintelligible to us if we had not read history, and seen that we too have passed through the same early state of ignorance and barbarism. Any trifle is sufficient to set them together by the ears. They pretend to be all equals, and the more they have struggled to be so, by removing old distinctions and starting afresh, the more glaring and intolerable the disparity becomes, because nothing in hereditary affections and associations is left to soften the one naked distinction between the many who have nothing and the few who have much. Of course the many hate the few, but without the few they could not live. The many are always assailing the few; sometimes they exterminate the few; but as soon as they have done so, a new few starts out of the many, and is harder to deal with than the old few. For where societies are large, and competition to have something is the predominant fever, there must be always many losers and few gainers. In short, they are savages groping their way in the dark toward some gleam of light, and would demand our commiseration for their infirmities, if, like all savages, they did not provoke their own destruction by their arrogance and cruelty. Can you imagine that creatures of this kind, armed only with such miserable weapons as you may see in our museum of antiquities, clumsy iron

tubes charged with saltpetre, have more than once threatened with destruction a tribe of the Vrilya, which dwells nearest to them, because they say they have thirty millions of population—and that tribe may have fifty thousand—if the latter do not accept their notions of Soc-Sec (money-getting) on some trading principles which they have the impudence to call a ‘law of civilization?’”

“But thirty millions of population are formidable odds against fifty thousand!”

My host stared at me astonished. “Stranger,” said he, “you could not have heard me say that this threatened tribe belongs to the Vrilya; and it only waits for these savages to declare war, in order to commission some half-a-dozen small children to sweep away their whole population.”

At these words I felt a thrill of horror, recognizing much more affinity with “the savages” than I did with the Vrilya, and remembering all I had said in praise of the glorious American institutions, which Aph-Lin stigmatized as Koom-Posh. Recovering my self-possession, I asked if there were modes of transit by which I could safely visit this temerarious and remote people.

“You can travel with safety, by vril agency, either along the ground or amid the air, throughout all the range of the communities with which we are allied and akin; but I cannot vouch for your safety in barbarous nations governed by different laws from ours; nations, indeed, so benighted, that there are among them large numbers who actually live by stealing from each other, and one could not with safety in the Silent Hours even leave the doors of one’s own house open.”

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Taë, who came to inform us that he, having been deputed to discover and destroy the enormous reptile which I had seen on my first arrival, had been on the watch for it ever since his visit to me, and had begun to suspect that my eyes had deceived me, or that the creature had made its way through the cavities within the rocks to the wild regions in which dwelt its kindred race, when it gave evidences of its whereabouts by a great devastation of the herbage bordering one of the lakes. “And,” said Taë, “I feel sure that within that lake it is now hiding. So” (turning to me) “I thought it might

amuse you to accompany me to see the way we destroy such unpleasant visitors." As I looked at the face of the young child, and called to mind the enormous size of the creature he proposed to exterminate, I felt myself shudder with fear for him, and perhaps fear for myself, if I accompanied him in such a chase. But my curiosity to witness the destructive effects of the boasted vril, and my unwillingness to lower myself in the eyes of an infant by betraying apprehensions of personal safety, prevailed over my first impulse. Accordingly, I thanked Taë for his courteous consideration for my amusement, and professed my willingness to set out with him on so diverting an enterprise.

CHAPTER XVIII.

As Taë and myself, on quitting the town, and leaving to the left the main road which led to it, struck into the fields, the strange and solemn beauty of the landscape, lighted up, by numberless lamps, to the verge of the horizon, fascinated my eyes, and rendered me for some time an inattentive listener to the talk of my companion.

Along our way various operations of agriculture were being carried on by machinery, the forms of which were new to me, and for the most part very graceful; for among these people, art, being so cultivated for the sake of mere utility, exhibits itself in adorning or refining the shapes of useful objects. Precious metals and gems are so profuse among them, that they are lavished on things devoted to purposes the most commonplace; and their love of utility leads them to beautify its tools, and quickens their imagination in a way unknown to themselves.

In all service, whether in or out of doors, they make great use of automaton figures, which are so ingenious, and so pliant to the operations of vril, that they actually seem gifted with reason. It was scarcely possible to distinguish the figures I beheld, apparently guiding or superintending the rapid movements of vast engines, from human forms endowed with thought.

By degrees, as we continued to walk on, my attention became roused by the lively and acute remarks of my companion. The intelligence of the children among this

race is marvellously precocious, perhaps from the habit of having intrusted to them, at so early an age, the toils and responsibilities of middle age. Indeed, in conversing with Taë, I felt as if talking with some superior and observant man of my own years. I asked him if he could form any estimate of the number of communities into which the race of the Vril-ya is subdivided.

"Not exactly," he said, "because they multiply, of course, every year as the surplus of each community is drafted off. But I heard my father say that, according to the last report, there were a million and a half of communities speaking our language, and adopting our institutions and forms of life and government; but, I believe, with some differences, about which you had better ask Zee. She knows more than most of the Ana do. An An cares less for things that do not concern him than a Gy does; the Gy-ei are inquisitive creatures."

"Does each community restrict itself to the same number of families or amount of population that you do?"

"No; some have much smaller populations, some have larger—varying according to the extent of the country they appropriate, or to the degree of excellence to which they have brought their machinery. Each community sets its own limit according to circumstances, taking care always that there shall never arise any class of poor by the pressure of population upon the productive powers of the domain, and that no state shall be too large for a government resembling that of a single well-ordered family. I imagine that no vril community exceeds thirty thousand households. But, as a general rule, the smaller the community, provided there be hands enough to do justice to the capacities of the territory it occupies, the richer each individual is, and the larger the sum contributed to the general treasury—above all, the happier and the more tranquil is the whole political body, and the more perfect the products of its industry. The state which all tribes of the Vril-ya acknowledge to be the highest in civilization, and which has brought the vril force to its fullest development, is perhaps the smallest. It limits itself to four thousand families; but every inch of its territory is cultivated to the utmost perfection of garden ground; its machinery excels that of every other tribe, and there is no product of its industry in any de-

partment which is not sought for, at extraordinary prices, by each community of our race. All our tribes make this state their model, considering that we should reach the highest state of civilization allowed to mortals if we could unite the greatest degree of happiness with the highest degree of intellectual achievement; and it is clear that the smaller the society the less difficult that will be. Ours is too large for it."

This reply set me thinking. I reminded myself of that little state of Athens, with only twenty thousand free citizens, and which to this day our mightiest nations regard as the supreme guide and model in all departments of intellect. But then Athens permitted fierce rivalry and perpetual change, and was certainly not happy. Rousing myself from the reverie into which these reflections had plunged me, I brought back our talk to the subjects connected with emigration.

"But," said I, "when, I suppose yearly, a certain number among you agree to quit home and found a new community elsewhere, they must necessarily be very few, and scarcely sufficient, even with the help of the machines they take with them, to clear the ground, and build towns, and form a civilized state with the comforts and luxuries in which they had been reared."

"You mistake. All the tribes of the Vril-ya are in constant communication with each other, and settle amongst themselves each year what proportion of one community will unite with the emigrants of another, so as to form a state of sufficient size; and the place for emigration is agreed upon at least a year before, and pioneers sent from each state to level rocks, and embank waters, and construct houses; so that when the emigrants at last go, they find a city already made, and a country around it at least partially cleared. Our hardy life as children makes us take cheerfully to travel and adventure. I mean to emigrate myself when of age."

"Do the emigrants always select places hitherto uninhabited and barren?"

"As yet generally, because it is our rule never to destroy except when necessary to our well-being. Of course, we cannot settle in lands already occupied by the Vril-ya; and if we take the cultivated lands of the other races of Ana, we must utterly destroy the previous inhabitants. Sometimes, as it is, we take waste spots, and

find that a troublesome, quarrelsome race of Ana, especially if under the administration of Koom-Posh or Glek-Nas, resents our vicinity, and picks a quarrel with us; then, of course, as menacing our welfare, we destroy it: there is no coming to terms of peace with a race so idiotic that it is always changing the form of government which represents it. Koom-Posh," said the child, emphatically, "is bad enough, still it has brains, though at the back of its head, and is not without a heart; but in Glek-Nas the brain and heart of the creatures disappear, and they become all jaws, claws, and belly."

"You express yourself strongly. Allow me to inform you that I myself, and I am proud to say it, am the citizen of a Koom-Posh."

"I no longer," answered Taë, "wonder to see you here so far from your home. What was the condition of your native community before it became a Koom-Posh?"

"A settlement of emigrants—like those settlements which your tribe sends forth—but so far unlike your settlements, that it was dependent on the state from which it came. It shook off that yoke, and, crowned with eternal glory, became a Koom-Posh."

"Eternal glory! how long has the Koom-Posh lasted?"

"About one hundred years."

"The length of an An's life—a very young community. In much less than another one hundred years your Koom-Posh will be a Glek-Nas."

"Nay, the oldest states in the world I come from, have such faith in its duration, that they are all gradually shaping their institutions so as to melt into ours, and their most thoughtful politicians say that, whether they like it or not, the inevitable tendency of these old states is toward Koom-Posh-erie."

"The old states?"

"Yes, the old states."

"With populations very small in proportion to the area of productive land?"

"On the contrary, with populations very large in proportion to that area."

"I see! old states indeed!—so old as to become driveling if they don't pack off that surplus population as we do ours—very old states!—very, very old! Pray, Tish, do you think it wise for very old men to try to turn head-over-heels as very young children do? And if you ask

them why they attempted such antics, should you not laugh if they answered that by imitating very young children they could become very young children themselves? Ancient history abounds with instances of this sort a great many thousands years ago—and in every instance a very old state that played at Koom-Posh soon tumbled into Glek-Nas. Then, in horror of its own self, it cried out for a master, as an old man in his dotage cries out for a nurse; and after a succession of masters or nurses, more or less long, that very old state died out of history. A very old state attempting Koom-Posh-erie is like a very old man who pulls down the house to which he has been accustomed, but he has so exhausted his vigor in pulling down, that all he can do in the way of rebuilding is to run up a crazy hut, in which himself and his successors whine out, 'How the wind blows! How the walls shake!'

"My dear Taë, I make all excuse for your unenlightened prejudices, which every school-boy educated in a Koom-Posh could easily controvert, though he might not be so precociously learned in ancient history as you appear to be."

"I learned! not a bit of it. But would a school-boy, educated in your Koom-Posh, ask his great-great-grandfather or great-great-grandmother to stand on his or her head with the feet uppermost? and if the poor old folks hesitated—say, 'What do you fear?—see how I do it!'"

"Taë, I disdain to argue with a child of your age. I repeat, I make allowances for your want of that culture which a Koom-Posh alone can bestow."

"I, in my turn," answered Taë, with an air of the suave but lofty good breeding which characterizes his race, "not only make allowances for you as not educated among the Vrîl-ya, but I entreat you to vouchsafe me your pardon for insufficient respect to the habits and opinions of so amiable a—Tish!"

I ought before to have observed that I was commonly called Tish by my host and his family, as being a polite and indeed a pet name, literally signifying a small barbarian; the children apply it endearingly to the tame species of Frog which they keep in their gardens.

We had now reached the banks of a lake, and Taë here paused to point out to me the ravages made in fields skirting it. "The enemy certainly lies within

these waters," said Taë. "Observe what shoals of fish are crowded together at the margin. Even the great fishes with the small ones, who are their habitual prey and who generally shun them, all forget their instincts in the presence of a common destroyer. This reptile certainly must belong to the class of Krek-a, which are more devouring than any other, and are said to be among the few surviving species of the world's dreadest inhabitants before the Ana were created. The appetite of a Krek is insatiable—it feeds alike upon vegetable and animal life; but for the swift-footed creatures of the elk species it is too slow in its movements. Its favorite dainty is an An when it can catch him unawares; and hence the Ana destroy it relentlessly whenever it enters their dominion. I have heard that when our forefathers first cleared this country, these monsters, and others like them, abounded, and, vril being then undiscovered, many of our race were devoured. It was impossible to exterminate them wholly till that discovery which constitutes the power and sustain the civilization of our race. But after the uses of vril became familiar to us, all creatures inimical to us were soon annihilated. Still, once a year or so, one of these enormous creatures wanders from the unreclaimed and savage districts beyond, and within my memory one seized upon a young Gy who was bathing in this very lake. Had she been on land and armed with her staff, it would not have dared even to show itself; for, like all savage creatures, the reptile has a marvellous instinct, which warns it against the bearer of the vril wand. How they teach their young to avoid him, though seen for the first time, is one of those mysteries which you may ask Zee to explain, for I cannot.* So long as I stand here, the monster will not stir from its lurking-place; but we must now decoy it forth."

"Will not that be difficult?"

"Not at all. Seat yourself yonder on that crag (about one hundred yards from the bank), while I retire to a distance. In a short time the reptile will catch sight or scent of you, and, perceiving that you are no vril-bearer,

* The reptile in this instinct does but resemble our wild birds and animals, which will not come in reach of a man armed with a gun. When the electric wires were first put up, partridges struck against them in their flight, and fell down wounded. No younger generations of partridges meet with a similar accident.

will come forth to devour you. As soon as it is fairly out of the water, it becomes my prey."

"Do you mean to tell me that I am to be the decoy to that horrible monster which could engulf me within its jaws in a second! I beg to decline."

The child laughed. "Fear nothing," said he; "only sit still."

Instead of obeying this command, I made a bound, and was about to take fairly to my heels, when Taë touched me lightly on the shoulder, and, fixing his eyes steadily on mine, I was rooted to the spot. All power of volition left me. Submissive to the infant's gesture, I followed him to the crag he had indicated, and seated myself there in silence. Most readers have seen something of the effects of electro-biology, whether genuine or spurious. No professor of that doubtful craft had ever been able to influence a thought or a movement of mine, but I was a mere machine at the will of this terrible child. Meanwhile he expanded his wings, soared aloft, and alighted amidst a copse at the brow of a hill at some distance.

I was alone; and turning my eyes with an indescribable sensation of horror toward the lake, I kept them fixed on its water, spell-bound. It might be ten or fifteen minutes, to me it seemed ages, before the still surface, gleaming under the lamplight, began to be agitated toward the centre. At the same time the shoals of fish near the margin evinced their sense of the enemy's approach by splash and leap and bubbling circle. I could detect their hurried flight hither and thither, some even casting themselves ashore. A long, dark, undulous furrow came moving along the waters, nearer and nearer, till the vast head of the reptile emerged—its jaws bristling with fangs, and its dull eyes fixing themselves hungrily on the spot where I sat motionless. And now its forefeet were on the strand—now its enormous breast, scaled on either side as in armor, in the centre showing its corrugated skin of a dull venomous yellow; and now its whole length was on the land, a hundred feet or more from the jaw to the tail. Another stride of those ghastly feet would have brought it to the spot where I sat. There was but a moment between me and this grim form of death, when what seemed a flash of lightning shot through the air, smote, and, for a space in time briefer than that in which

a man can draw his breath, enveloped the monster; and then, as the flash vanished, there lay before me a blackened, charred, smouldering mass, a something gigantic, but of which even the outlines of form were burned away, and rapidly crumbling into dust and ashes. I remained still seated, still speechless, ice-cold with a new sensation of dread: what had been horror was now awe.

I felt the child's hand on my head—fear left me—the spell was broken—I rose up. "You see with what ease the Vrilya destroy their enemies," said Taë; and then, moving toward the bank, he contemplated the smouldering relics of the monster, and said quietly, "I have destroyed larger creatures, but none with so much pleasure. Yes, it *is* a Krek; what suffering it must have inflicted while it lived!" Then he took up the poor fishes that had flung themselves ashore, and restored them mercifully to their native element.

CHAPTER XIX.

As we walked back to the town, Taë took a new and circuitous way, in order to show me what, to use a familiar term, I will call the "Station," from which emigrants or travellers to other communities commence their journeys. I had, on a former occasion, expressed a wish to see their vehicles. These I found to be of two kinds, one for land journeys, one for aerial voyages: the former were of all sizes and forms, some not larger than an ordinary carriage, some movable houses of one story and containing several rooms, furnished according to the ideas of comfort or luxury which are entertained by the Vrilya. The aerial vehicles were of light substances, not the least resembling our balloons, but rather our boats and pleasure-vessels, with helm and rudder, with large wings as paddles, and a central machine worked by vril. All the vehicles both for land and air were indeed worked by that potent and mysterious agency.

I saw a convoy set out on its journey, but it had few passengers, containing chiefly articles of merchandise, and was bound to a neighboring community; for among all the tribes of the Vrilya there is considerable commercial interchange. I may here observe, that their

money currency does not consist of the precious metals, which are too common among them for that purpose. The smaller coins in ordinary use are manufactured from a peculiar fossil shell, the comparatively scarce remnant of some very early deluge, or other convulsion of nature, by which a species has become extinct. It is minute, and flat as an oyster, and takes a jewel-like polish. This coinage circulates among all the tribes of the Vrilya. Their larger transactions are carried on much like ours, by bills of exchange, and thin metallic plates which answer the purpose of our bank-notes.

Let me take this occasion of adding that the taxation among the tribe I became acquainted with was very considerable, compared with the amount of population. But I never heard that any one grumbled at it, for it was devoted to purposes of universal utility, and indeed necessary to the civilization of the tribe. The cost of lighting so large a range of country, of providing for emigration, of maintaining the public buildings at which the various operations of national intellect were carried on, from the first education of an infant to the departments in which the College of Sages were perpetually trying new experiments in mechanical science—all these involved the necessity for considerable state funds. To these I must add an item that struck me as very singular. I have said that all the human labor required by the state is carried on by children up to the marriageable age. For this labor the state pays, and at a rate immeasurably higher than our remuneration to labor even in the United States. According to their theory, every child, male or female, on attaining the marriageable age, and there terminating the period of labor, should have acquired enough for an independent competence during life. As, no matter what the disparity of fortune in the parents, all the children must equally serve, so all are equally paid according to their several ages or the nature of the work. Where the parents or friends choose to retain a child in their own service, they must pay into the public fund in the same ratio as the state pays to the children it employs; and this sum is handed over to the child when the period of service expires. This practice serves, no doubt, to render the notion of social equality familiar and agreeable; and if it may be said that all the children form a democracy, no less truly it may be said that all the adults form

an aristocracy. The exquisite politeness and refinement of manners among the Vrilya, the generosity of their sentiments, the absolute leisure they enjoy for following out their own private pursuits, the amenities of their domestic intercourse, in which they seem as members of one noble order that can have no distrust of each other's word or deed, all combine to make the Vrilya the most perfect nobility which a political disciple of Plato or Sidney could conceive for the ideal of an aristocratic republic.

CHAPTER XX.

FROM the date of the expedition with Taë which I have just narrated, the child paid me frequent visits. He had taken a liking to me, which I cordially returned. Indeed, as he was not yet twelve years old, and had not commenced the course of scientific studies with which childhood closes in that country, my intellect was less inferior to his than to that of the elder members of his race, especially of the Gy-ei, and most especially of the accomplished Zee. The children of the Vrilya, having upon their minds the weight of so many active duties and grave responsibilities, are not generally mirthful; but Tëa, with all his wisdom, had much of the playful good-humor one often finds the characteristic of elderly men of genius. He felt that sort of pleasure in my society which a boy of a similar age in the upper world has in the company of a pet dog or monkey. It amused him to try and teach me the ways of his people, as it amuses a nephew of mine to make his poodle walk on his hind legs or jump through a hoop. I willingly lent myself to such experiments, but I never achieved the success of the poodle. I was very much interested at first in the attempt to ply the wings which the youngest of the Vrilya use as nimbly and easily as ours do their legs and arms; but my efforts were attended with contusions serious enough to make me abandon them in despair.

These wings, as I before said, are very large, reaching to the knee, and in repose thrown back so as to form a very graceful mantle. They are composed from the feathers of a gigantic bird that abounds in the rocky heights of the country—the color mostly white, but some-

times with reddish streaks. They are fastened round the shoulders with light but strong springs of steel; and, when expanded, the arms slide through loops for that purpose, forming, as it were, a stout central membrane. As the arms are raised, a tubular lining beneath the vest or tunic becomes, by mechanical contrivance inflated with air, increased or diminished at will by the movement of the arms, and serving to buoy the whole form as on bladders. The wings and the balloon-like apparatus are highly charged with vril; and when the body is thus wafted upward, it seems to become singularly lightened of its weight. I found it easy enough to soar from the ground; indeed, when the wings were spread it was scarcely possible not to soar, but then came the difficulty and the danger. I utterly failed in the power to use and direct the pinions, though I am considered among my own race unusually alert and ready in bodily exercises, and am a very practised swimmer. I could only make the most confused and blundering efforts at flight. I was the servant of the wings; the wings were not my servants—they were beyond my control; and when by a violent strain of muscle, and, I must fairly own, in that abnormal strength which is given by excessive fright, I curbed their gyrations and brought them near to the body, it seemed as if I lost the sustaining power stored in them and the connecting bladders, as when air is let out of a balloon, and found myself precipitated again to the earth; saved, indeed, by some spasmodic flutterings, from being dashed to pieces, but not saved from the bruises and the stun of a heavy fall. I would, however, have persevered in my attempts, but for the advice or the commands of the scientific Zee, who had benevolently accompanied my flutterings, and, indeed, on the last occasion, flying just under me, received my form as it fell on her own expanded wings, and preserved me from breaking my head on the roof of the pyramid from which we had ascended.

"I see," she said, "that your trials are in vain, not from the fault of the wings and their appurtenances, nor from any imperfectness and malformation of your own corpuscular system, but from irremediable, because organic, defect in your power of volition. Learn that the connection between the will and the agencies of that fluid which has been subjected to the control of the Vrilya was never established by the first discoverers, never

achieved by a single generation; it has gone on increasing, like other properties of race, in proportion as it has been uniformly transmitted from parent to child, so that, at last, it has become an instinct; and an infant An of our race wills to fly as intuitively and unconsciously as he wills to walk. He thus plies his invented or artificial wings with as much safety as a bird plies those with which it is born. I did not think sufficiently of this when I allowed you to try an experiment which allured me, for I longed to have in you a companion. I shall abandon the experiment now. Your life is becoming dear to me." Herewith the Gy's voice and face softened, and I felt more seriously alarmed than I had been in my previous flights.

Now that I am on the subject of wings, I ought not to omit mention of a custom among the Gy-ei which seems to me very pretty and tender in the sentiment it implies. A Gy wears wings habitually while yet a virgin—she joins the Ana in their aerial sports—she adventures alone and afar into the wilder regions of the sunless world: in the boldness and height of her soarings, not less than in the grace of her movements, she excels the opposite sex. But from the day of marriage she wears wings no more, she suspends them with her own willing hand over the nuptial couch, never to be resumed unless the marriage tie be severed by divorce or death.

Now when Zee's voice and eyes thus softened—and at that softening I prophetically recoiled and shuddered—Taë, who had accompanied us in our flights, but who, child-like, had been much more amused with my awkwardness than sympathizing in my fears or aware of my danger, hovered over us, poised amidst the still radiant air, serene and motionless on his outspread wings, and hearing the endearing words of the young Gy, laughed aloud. Said he, "If the Tish cannot learn the use of wings, you may still be his companion, Zee, for you can suspend your own."

CHAPTER XXI.

I HAD for some time observed in my host's highly informed and powerfully proportioned daughter that kindly and protective sentiment which, whether above the earth

or below it, an all-wise Providence has bestowed upon the feminine division of the human race. But until very lately I had ascribed it to that affection for "pets" which a human female at every age shares with a human child. I now became painfully aware that the feeling with which Zee deigned to regard me was different from that which I had inspired in Taë. But this conviction gave me none of that complacent gratification which the vanity of man ordinarily conceives from a flattering appreciation of his personal merits on the part of the fair sex; on the contrary, it inspired me with fear. Yet of all the Gy-ei in the community, if Zee were perhaps the wisest and the strongest, she was, by common repute, the gentlest, and she was certainly the most popularly beloved. The desire to aid, to succor, to protect, to comfort, to bless seemed to pervade her whole being. Though the complicated miseries that originate in penury and guilt are unknown to the social system of the Vril-ya, still no sage had yet discovered in vril an agency which could banish sorrow from life; and wherever amongst her people sorrow found its way, there Zee followed in the mission of comforter. Did some sister Gy fail to secure the love she sighed for? Zee sought her out, and brought all the resources of her lore, and all the consolations of her sympathy, to bear upon a grief that so needs the solace of a confidant. In the rare cases when grave illness seized upon childhood or youth, and the cases, less rare, when, in the hardy and adventurous probation of infants, some accident, attended with pain and injury, occurred, Zee forsook her studies and her sports, and became the healer and the nurse. Her favorite flights were toward the extreme boundaries of the domain where children were stationed on guard against outbreaks of warring forces in nature, or the invasions of devouring animals, so that she might warn them of any peril which her knowledge detected or foresaw, or be at hand if any harm had befallen. Nay, even in the exercise of her scientific acquirements there was a concurrent benevolence of purpose and will. Did she learn any novelty in invention that would be useful to the practitioner of some special art or craft? she hastened to communicate and explain it. Was some veteran sage of the College perplexed and wearied with the toil of an abstruse study? she would patiently devote herself to his

aid, work out details for him, sustain his spirits with her hopeful smile, quicken his wit with her luminous suggestion, be to him, as it were, his own good genius made visible as the strengthener and inspirer. The same tenderness she exhibited to the inferior creatures. I have often known her bring home some sick and wounded animal, and tend and cherish it as a mother would tend and cherish her stricken child. Many a time when I sat in the balcony, or hanging garden, on which my window opened, I have watched her rising in the air on her radiant wings, and in a few moments groups of infants below, catching sight of her, would soar upward with joyous sounds of greeting; clustering and sporting around her, so that she seemed a very centre of innocent delight. When I have walked with her amidst the rocks and valleys without the city, the elk-deer would scent or see her from afar, come bounding up, eager for the caress of her hand, or follow her footsteps, till dismissed by some musical whisper that the creature had learned to comprehend. It is the fashion among the virgin Gy-ei to wear on their foreheads a circlet, or coronet, with gems resembling opals, arranged in four points or rays like stars. These are lustreless in ordinary use, but if touched by the vril wand they take a clear lambent flame, which illuminates, yet not burns. This serves as an ornament in their festivities, and as a lamp, if, in their wanderings beyond their artificial lights, they have to traverse the dark. There are times, when I have seen Zee's thoughtful majesty of face lighted up by this crowning halo, that I could scarcely believe her to be a creature of mortal birth, and bent my head before her as the vision of a being among the celestial orders. But never once did my heart feel for this lofty type of the noblest womanhood a sentiment of human love. Is it that, among the race I belong to, man's pride so far influences his passions that woman loses to him her special charm of woman if he feels her to be in all things eminently superior to himself? But by what strange infatuation could this peerless daughter of a race which, in the supremacy of its powers and the felicity of its conditions, ranked all other races in the category of barbarians, have deigned to honor me with her preference? In personal qualifications, though I passed for good-looking amongst the people I came from, the handsomest of my countrymen

might have seemed insignificant and homely beside the grand and serene type of beauty which characterized the aspect of the Vrilya.

That novelty, the very difference between myself and those to whom Zee was accustomed, might serve to bias her fancy, was probable enough, and, as the reader will see later, such a cause might suffice to account for the predilection with which I was distinguished by a young Gy scarcely out of her childhood, and very inferior in all respects to Zee. But whoever will consider those tender characteristics which I have just ascribed to the daughter of Aph-Lin, may readily conceive that the main cause of my attraction to her was in her instinctive desire to cherish, to comfort, to protect, and, in protecting, to sustain and to exalt. Thus, when I look back, I account for the only weakness unworthy of her lofty nature, which bowed the daughter of the Vrilya to a woman's affection for one so inferior to herself as was her father's guest. But be the cause what it may, the consciousness that I had inspired such affection thrilled me with awe—a moral awe of her very perfections, of her mysterious powers, of the inseparable distinctions between her race and my own; and with that awe, I must confess to my shame, there combined the more material and ignoble dread of the perils to which her preference would expose me.

Could it be supposed for a moment that the parents and friends of this exalted being could view without indignation and disgust the possibility of an alliance between herself and a Tish? Her they could not punish, her they could not confine nor restrain. Neither in domestic nor in political life do they acknowledge any law of force amongst themselves; but they could effectually put an end to her infatuation by a flash of vril inflicted upon me.

Under these anxious circumstances, fortunately, my conscience and sense of honor were free from reproach. It became clearly my duty, if Zee's preference continued manifest, to intimate it to my host, with, of course, all the delicacy which is ever to be preserved by a well-bred man in confiding to another any degree of favor by which one of the fair sex may condescend to distinguish him. Thus, at all events, I should be freed from responsibility or suspicion of voluntary participation in the sentiments

of Zee; and the superior wisdom of my host might probably suggest some sage extrication from my perilous dilemma. In this resolve I obeyed the ordinary instinct of civilized and moral man, who, erring though he be, still generally prefers the right course in those cases where it is obviously against his inclinations, his interests and his safety to elect the wrong one.

CHAPTER XXII.

As the reader has seen, Aph-Lin had not favored my general and unrestricted intercourse with his countrywomen. Though relying on my promise to abstain from giving any information as to the world I had left, and still more on the promise of those to whom had been put the same request, not to question me, which Zee had exacted from Taë, yet he did not feel sure that, if I were allowed to mix with the strangers whose curiosity the sight of me had aroused, I could sufficiently guard myself against their inquiries. When I went out, therefore, it was never alone; I was always accompanied either by one of my host's family, or my child-friend Taë. Bra, Aph-Lin's wife, seldom stirred beyond the gardens which surrounded the house, and was fond of reading the ancient literature, which contained something of romance and adventure not to be found in the writings of recent ages, and presented pictures of a life unfamiliar to her experience and interesting to her imagination; pictures, indeed, of a life more resembling that which we lead every day above ground, colored by our sorrows, sins, and passions, and much to her what the *Tales of the Genii* or the *Arabian Nights* are to us. But her love of reading did not prevent Bra from the discharge of her duties as mistress of the largest household in the city. She went daily the round of her chambers and saw that the automata and other mechanical contrivances were in order, that the numerous children employed by Aph-Lin, whether in his private or public capacity, were carefully tended. Bra also inspected the accounts of the whole estate, and it was her great delight to assist her husband in the business connected with his office as chief administrator of the Lighting Department, so that her avoca-

tions necessarily kept her much within-doors. The two sons were both completing their education at the College of Sages; and the elder, who had a strong passion for mechanics, and especially for works connected with the machinery of time-pieces and automata, had decided on devoting himself to these pursuits, and was now occupied in constructing a shop, or warehouse, at which his inventions could be exhibited and sold. The younger son preferred farming and rural occupations; and when not attending the College, at which he chiefly studied the theories of agriculture, was much absorbed by his practical application of that science to his father's lands. It will be seen by this how completely equality of ranks is established among this people—a shop-keeper being exactly the same grade in estimation as the large landed proprietor. Aph-Lin was the wealthiest member of the community, and his eldest son preferred keeping a shop to any other avocation; nor was this choice thought to show any want of elevated notions on his part.

This young man had been much interested in examining my watch, the works of which were new to him, and was greatly pleased when I made him a present of it. Shortly after, he returned the gift with interest, by a watch of his own construction, marking both the time as in my watch and the time as kept among the Vrilya. I have that watch still, and it has been much admired by many among the most eminent watch-makers of London and Paris. It is of gold, with diamond hands and figures, and it plays a favorite tune among the Vrilya in striking the hours: it only requires to be wound up once in ten months, and has never gone wrong since I had it. These young brothers being thus occupied, my usual companions in that family, when I went abroad, were my host or his daughter. Now, agreeably with the honorable conclusions I had come to, I began to excuse myself from Zee's invitations to go out alone with her, and seized an occasion when that learned Gy was delivering a lecture at the College of Sages to ask Aph-Lin to show me his country-seat. As this was at some little distance, and as Aph-Lin was not fond of walking, while I had discreetly relinquished all attempts at flying, we proceeded to our destination in one of the aerial boats belonging to my host. A child eight years old, in his employ, was our conductor. My host and myself reclined

on cushions, and I found the movement very easy and luxurious.

"Aph-Lin," said I, "you will not, I trust, be displeased with me, if I ask your permission to travel for a short time, and visit other tribes or communities of your illustrious race. I have also a strong desire to see those nations which do not adopt your institutions, and which you consider as savages. It would interest me greatly to notice what are the distinctions between them and the races whom we consider civilized in the world I have left."

"It is utterly impossible that you should go hence alone," said Aph-Lin. "Even among the Vrilya you would be exposed to great dangers. Certain peculiarities of formation and color, and the extraordinary phenomenon of hirsute bushes upon your cheeks and chin, denoting in you a species of An distinct alike from our race and any known race of barbarians yet extant, would attract, of course, the special attention of the College of Sages in whatever community of Vrilya you visited, and it would depend upon the individual temper of some individual sage whether you would be received, as you have been here, hospitably, or whether you would not be at once dissected for scientific purposes. Know that when the Tur first took you to his house, and while you were there put to sleep by Taü in order to recover from your previous pain or fatigue, the sages summoned by the Tur were divided in opinion whether you were a harmless or an obnoxious animal. During your unconscious state your teeth were examined, and they clearly showed that you were not only graminivorous but carnivorous. Carnivorous animals of your size are always destroyed, as being of dangerous and savage nature. Our teeth, as you have doubtless observed,* are not those of the creatures who devour flesh. It is, indeed, maintained by Zee and other philosophers, that as, in remote ages, the Ana did prey upon living beings of the brute species, their teeth must have been fitted for that purpose. But, even if so, they have been modified by hereditary transmission, and suited to the food on which we now exist; nor are even the barbarians, who adopt the turbulent

* I never had observed it; and, if I had, am not physiologist enough to have distinguished the difference.

and ferocious institutions of Glek-Nas, devourers of flesh like beasts of prey.

"In the course of this dispute it was proposed to dissect you; but Taë begged you off, and the Tur being, by office, averse to all novel experiments at variance with our custom of sparing life, except where it is clearly proved to be for the good of the community to take it, sent to me, whose business it is, as the richest man of the state, to afford hospitality to strangers from a distance. It was at my option to decide whether or not you were a stranger whom I could safely admit. Had I declined to receive you, you would have been handed over to the College of Sages, and what might there have befallen you I do not like to conjecture. Apart from this danger, you might chance to encounter some child of four years old, just put in possession of his vril staff; and who, in alarm at your strange appearance, and in the impulse of the moment, might reduce you to a cinder. Taë himself was about to do so when he first saw you, had his father not checked his hand. Therefore I say you cannot travel alone, but with Zee you would be safe; and I have no doubt that she would accompany you on a tour round the neighboring communities of Vril-ya (to the savage states, No!): I will ask her."

Now, as my main object in proposing to travel was to escape from Zee, I hastily exclaimed, "Nay, pray do not! I relinquish my design. You have said enough as to its dangers to deter me from it; and I can scarcely think it right that a young Gy of the personal attractions of your lovely daughter should travel into other regions without a better protector than a Tish of my insignificant strength and stature."

Aph-Lin emitted the soft sibilant sound which is the nearest approach to laughter that a full-grown An permits to himself, ere he replied: "Pardon my discourteous but momentary indulgence of mirth at any observation seriously made by my guest. I could not but be amused at the idea of Zee, who is so fond of protecting others that children call her 'THE GUARDIAN,' needing a protector herself against any dangers arising from the audacious admiration of males. Know that our Gy-ei, while unmarried, are accustomed to travel alone among other tribes, to see if they find there some An who may please them more than the Ana they find at home. Zee has al-

ready made three such journeys, but hitherto her heart has been untouched."

Here the opportunity which I sought was afforded to me, and I said, looking down, and with faltering voice, "Will you, my kind host, promise to pardon me, if what I am about to say gives you offence?"

"Say only the truth, and I cannot be offended; or, could I be so, it would not be for me, but for you to pardon."

"Well, then, assist me to quit you, and, much as I should have liked to witness more of the wonders, and enjoy more of the felicity, which belong to your people, let me return to my own."

"I fear there are reasons why I cannot do that; at all events, not without permission of the Tur, and he, probably, would not grant it. You are not destitute of intelligence; you may (though I do not think so) have concealed the degree of destructive powers possessed by your people; you might, in short, bring upon us some danger; and if the Tur entertains that idea, it would clearly be his duty either to put an end to you, or enclose you in a cage for the rest of your existence. But why should you wish to leave a state of society which you so politely allow to be more felicitous than your own?"

"Oh, Aph-Lin! my answer is plain. Lest in aught, and unwittingly, I should betray your hospitality; lest, in that caprice of will which in our world is proverbial among the other sex, and from which even a Gy is not free, your adorable daughter should deign to regard me, though a Tish, as if I were a civilized An, and—and—and——"

"Court you as her spouse," put in Aph-Lin, gravely, and without any visible sign of surprise or displeasure.

"You have said it."

"That would be a misfortune," resumed my host, after a pause, "and I feel that you have acted as you ought in warning me. It is, as you imply, not uncommon for an unwedded Gy to conceive tastes as to the object she covets which appear whimsical to others; but there is no power to compel a young Gy to any course opposed to that which she chooses to pursue. All we can do is to reason with her, and experience tells us that the whole College of Sages would find it vain to reason with a Gy in a matter that concerns her choice in love. I grieve

for you, because such a marriage would be against the A-glauran, or good of the community, for the children of such a marriage would adulterate the race: they might even come into the world with the teeth of carnivorous animals; this could not be allowed: Zee, as a Gy, cannot be controlled; but you, as a Tish, can be destroyed. I advise you, then, to resist her addresses; to tell her plainly that you can never return her love. This happens constantly. Many an An, however ardently wooed by one Gy, rejects her, and puts an end to her persecution by wedding another. The same course is open to you."

"No; for I cannot wed another Gy without equally injuring the community, and exposing it to the chance of rearing carnivorous children."

"That is true. All I can say, and I say it with the tenderness due to a Tish, and the respect due to a guest, is frankly this—if you yield, you will become a cinder. I must leave it to you to take the best way you can to defend yourself. Perhaps you had better tell Zee that she is ugly. That assurance on the lips of him she woos generally suffices to chill the most ardent Gy. Here we are at my country-house."

CHAPTER XXIII.

I CONFESS that my conversation with Aph-Lin, and the extreme coolness with which he stated his inability to control the dangerous caprice of his daughter, and treated the idea of the reduction into a cinder to which her amorous flame might expose my too seductive person, took away the pleasure I should otherwise have had in the contemplation of my host's country-seat, and the astonishing perfection of the machinery by which his farming operations were conducted. The house differed in appearance from the massive and sombre building which Aph-Lin inhabited in the city, and which seemed akin to the rocks out of which the city itself had been hewn into shape. The walls of the country-seat were composed by trees placed a few feet apart from each other, the interstices being filled in with the transparent metallic substance which serves the purpose of glass among the Ana. These trees were all in flower, and the

effect was very pleasing, if not in the best taste. We were received at the porch by life-like automata, who conducted us into a chamber, the like to which I never saw before, but have often on summer days dreamily imagined. It was a bower—half room, half garden. The walls were one mass of climbing flowers. The open spaces, which we call windows, and in which, here, the metallic surfaces were slid back, commanded various views; some, of the wide landscape with its lakes and rocks; some of small limited expanse answering to our conservatories, filled with tiers of flowers. Along the sides of the room were flower-beds, interspersed with cushions for repose. In the centre of the floor was a cistern and a fountain of that liquid light which I have presumed to be naphtha. It was luminous and of a roseate hue; it sufficed without lamps to light up the room with a subdued radiance. All around the fountain was carpeted with a soft deep lichen, not green (I have never seen that color in the vegetation of this country), but a quiet brown, on which the eye reposes with the same sense of relief as that with which in the upper world it reposes on green. In the outlets upon flowers (which I have compared to our conservatories) there were singing-birds innumerable, which, while we remained in the room, sang in those harmonies of tune to which they are, in these parts, so wonderfully trained. The roof was open. The whole scene had charms for every sense—music from the birds, fragrance from the flowers, and varied beauty to the eye at every aspect. About all was a voluptuous repose. What a place, methought, for a honeymoon, if a Gy bride were a little less formidably armed not only with the rights of woman, but with the powers of man! but when one thinks of a Gy, so learned, so tall, so stately, so much above the standard of the creature we call woman as was Zee, no! even if I had felt no fear of being reduced to a cinder, it is not of her I should have dreamed in that bower so constructed for dreams of poetic love.

The automata reappeared, serving one of those delicious liquids which form the innocent wines of the Vrilya.

“Truly,” said I, “this is a charming residence, and I can scarcely conceive why you do not settle yourself here instead of amid the gloomier abodes of the city.”

"As responsible to the community for the administration of light, I am compelled to reside chiefly in the city, and can only come hither for short intervals."

"But since I understand from you that no honors are attached to your office, and it involves some trouble, why do you accept it?"

"Each of us obeys without question the command of the Tur. He said, 'Be it requested that Aph-Lin shall be Commissioner of Light,' so I had no choice; but having held the office now for a long time, the cares, which were at first unwelcome, have become, if not pleasing, at least endurable. We are all formed by custom—even the difference of our race from the savage is but the transmitted continuance of custom, which becomes, through hereditary descent, part and parcel of our nature. You see there are Ana who even reconcile themselves to the responsibilities of chief magistrate, but no one would do so if his duties had not been rendered so light, or if there were any questions as to compliance with his requests."

"Not even if you thought the requests unwise or unjust?"

"We do not allow ourselves to think so, and, indeed, everything goes on as if each and all governed themselves according to immemorial custom."

"When the chief magistrate dies or retires, how do you provide for his successor?"

"The An who has discharged the duties of chief magistrate for many years is the best person to choose one by whom those duties may be understood, and he generally names his successor."

"His son, perhaps?"

"Seldom that; for it is not an office any one desires or seeks, and a father naturally hesitates to constrain his son. But if the Tur himself decline to make a choice, for fear it might be supposed that he owed some grudge to the person on whom his choice would settle, then there are three of the College of Sages who draw lots among themselves which shall have the power to elect the chief. We consider that the judgment of one An of ordinary capacity is better than the judgment of three or more, however wise they may be; for among three there would probably be disputes, and where there are disputes, passion clouds judgment. The worst choice

made by one who has no motive in choosing wrong, is better than the best choice made by many who have many motives for not choosing right."

"You reverse in your policy the maxims adopted in my country."

"Are you all, in your country, satisfied with your governors?"

"All! certainly not; the governors that most please some are sure to be those most displeasing to others."

"Then our system is better than yours."

"For you it may be; but according to our system a Tish could not be reduced to a cinder if a female compelled him to marry her; and as a Tish I sigh to return to my native world."

"Take courage, my dear little guest; Zee can't compel you to marry her. She can only entice you to do so. Don't be enticed. Come and look round my domain."

We went forth into a close, bordered with sheds; for though the Ana keep no stock for food, there are some animals which they rear for milking and others for shearing. The former have no resemblance to our cows, nor the latter to our sheep, nor do I believe such species exist amongst them. They use the milk of three varieties of animal: one resembles the antelope, but is much larger, being as tall as a camel; the other two are smaller, and, though differing somewhat from each other, resemble no creature I ever saw on earth. They are very sleek and of rounded proportions; their color that of the dappled deer, with very mild countenances and beautiful dark eyes. The milk of these three creatures differs in richness and in taste. It is usually diluted with water, and flavored with the juice of a peculiar and perfumed fruit, and in itself is very nutritious and palatable. The animal whose fleece serves them for clothing and many other purposes, is more like the Italian she-goat than any other creature, but is considerably larger, has no horns, and is free from the displeasing odor of our goats. Its fleece is not thick, but very long and fine; it varies in color, but is never white, more generally of a slate-like or lavender hue. For clothing it is usually worn dyed to suit the taste of the wearer. These animals were exceedingly tame, and were treated with extraordinary care and affection by the children (chiefly female) who tended them.

We then went through vast storehouses filled with grains and fruits. I may here observe that the main staple of food among these people consists—firstly, of a kind of corn much larger in ear than our wheat, and which by culture is perpetually being brought into new varieties of flavor; and, secondly, of a fruit of about the size of a small orange, which, when gathered, is hard and bitter. It is stowed away for many months in their warehouses, and then becomes succulent and tender. Its juice, which is of dark-red color, enters into most of their sauces. They have many kinds of fruit of the nature of the olive, from which delicious oils are extracted. They have a plant somewhat resembling the sugar-cane, but its juices are less sweet and of a delicate perfume. They have no bees nor honey-kneading insects, but they make much use of a sweet gum that oozes from a coniferous plant, not unlike the *araucaria*. Their soil teems also with esculent roots and vegetables, which it is the aim of their culture to improve and vary to the utmost. And I never remember any meal among this people, however it might be confined to the family household, in which some delicate novelty in such articles of food was not introduced. In fine, as I before observed, their cookery is exquisite, so diversified and nutritious that one does not miss animal food; and their own physical forms suffice to show that with them, at least, meat is not required for superior production of muscular fibre. They have no grapes—the drinks extracted from their fruits are innocent and refreshing. Their staple beverage, however, is water, in the choice of which they are very fastidious, distinguishing at once the slightest impurity.

“My younger son takes great pleasure in augmenting our produce,” said Aph-Lin as we passed through the storehouses, “and therefore will inherit these lands, which constitute the chief part of my wealth. To my elder son such inheritance would be a great trouble and affliction.”

“Are there many sons among you who think the inheritance of vast wealth would be a great trouble and affliction?”

“Certainly; there are indeed very few of the *Vril-ya* who do not consider that a fortune much above the average is a heavy burden. We are rather a lazy people after the age of childhood, and do not like undergoing more

cares than we can help, and great wealth does give its owner many cares. For instance, it marks us out for public offices, which none of us like and none of us can refuse. It necessitates our taking a continued interest in the affairs of any of our poorer countrymen, so that we may anticipate their wants and see that none fall into poverty. There is an old proverb amongst us which says, 'The poor man's need is the rich man's shame——'."

"Pardon me, if I interrupt you for a moment. You allow that some, even of the Vrilya, know want, and need relief."

"If by want you mean the destitution that prevails in a Koom-Posh, *that* is impossible with us, unless an An has, by some extraordinary process, got rid of all his means, cannot or will not emigrate, and has either tired out the affectionate aid of his relations or personal friends, or refuses to accept it."

"Well, then, does he not supply the place of an infant or automaton, and become a laborer—a servant?"

"No; then we regard him as an unfortunate person of unsound reason, and place him, at the expense of the State, in a public building, where every comfort and every luxury that can mitigate his affliction are lavished upon him. But an An does not like to be considered out of his mind, and therefore such cases occur so seldom that the public building I speak of is now a deserted ruin, and the last inmate of it was an An whom I recollect to have seen in my childhood. He did not seem conscious of loss of reason, and wrote glaubs (poetry). When I spoke of wants, I meant such wants as an An with desires larger than his means sometimes entertains—for expensive singing-birds, or bigger houses, or country-gardens; and the obvious way to satisfy such wants is to buy of him something that he sells. Hence Ana like myself, who are very rich, are obliged to buy a great many things they do not require, and live on a very large scale where they might prefer to live on a small one. For instance, the great size of my house in the town is a source of much trouble to my wife, and even to myself; but I am compelled to have it thus incommodiously large, because, as the richest An of the community, I am appointed to entertain the strangers from the other communities when they visit us, which they do in great crowds twice a year, when certain periodical entertain-

ments are held, and when relations scattered throughout all the realms of the Vrilya joyfully reunite for a time. This hospitality, on a scale so extensive, is not to my taste, and therefore I should have been happier had I been less rich. But we must all bear the lot assigned to us in this short passage through time that we call life. After all, what are a hundred years, more or less, to the ages through which we must pass hereafter? Luckily, I have one son who likes great wealth. It is a rare exception to the general rule, and I own I cannot myself understand it."

After this conversation I sought to return to the subject which continued to weigh on my heart—viz., the chances of escape from Zee. But my host politely declined to renew that topic, and summoned our air-boat. On our way back we were met by Zee, who, having found us gone, on her return from the College of Sages, had unfurled her wings and flown in search of us.

Her grand, but to me unalluring, countenance brightened as she beheld me, and, poising herself beside the boat on her large outspread plumes, she said reproachfully to Aph Lin—"Oh, father, was it right in you to hazard the life of your guest in a vehicle to which he is so unaccustomed? He might, by an incautious movement, fall over the side; and, alas! he is not like us, he has no wings. It were death to him to fall. Dear one!" (she added, accosting my shrinking self in a softer voice), "have you no thought of me, that you should thus hazard a life which has become almost a part of mine? Never again be thus rash, unless I am thy companion. What terror thou hast stricken into me!"

I glanced furtively at Aph-Lin, expecting, at least, that he would indignantly reprove his daughter for expressions of anxiety and affection which, under all the circumstances, would, in the world above ground, be considered immodest in the lips of a young female, addressed to a male not affianced to her, even if of the same rank as herself.

But so confirmed are the rights of females in that region, and so absolutely foremost among those rights do females claim the privilege of courtship, that Aph-Lin would no more have thought of reproving his virgin daughter than he would have thought of disobeying the Tur. In that country, custom, as he implied, is all in all.

He answered mildly, "Zee, the Tish was in no danger, and it is my belief that he can take very good care of himself."

"I would rather that he let me charge myself with his care. Oh, heart of my heart, it was in the thought of thy danger that I first felt how much I loved thee!"

Never did man feel in so false a position as I did. These words were spoken loud in the hearing of Zee's father—in the hearing of the child who steered. I blushed with shame for them, and for her, and could not help replying angrily: "Zee, either you mock me, which, as your father's guest, misbecomes you, or the words you utter are improper for a maiden Gy to address even to an An of her own race, if he has not wooed her with the consent of her parents. How much more improper to address them to a Tish, who has never presumed to solicit your affections, and who can never regard you with other sentiments than those of reverence and awe!"

Aph-Lin made me a covert sign of approbation, but said nothing.

"Be not so cruel!" exclaimed Zee, still in sonorous accents. "Can love command itself where it is truly felt? Do you suppose that a maiden Gy will conceal a sentiment that it elevates her to feel? What a country you must have come from!"

Here Aph-Lin gently interposed, saying, "Among the Tish-a the rights of your sex do not appear to be established, and at all events my guest may converse with you more freely if unchecked by the presence of others."

To this remark Zee made no reply, but, darting on me a tender reproachful glance, agitated her wings and fled homeward.

"I had counted, at least, on some aid from my host," said I, bitterly, "in the perils to which his own daughter exposes me."

"I gave you the best aid I could. To contradict a Gy in her love affairs is to confirm her purpose. She allows no counsel to come between her and her affections."

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON alighting from the air-boat, a child accosted Aph-Lin in the hall with a request that he would be present at the funeral obsequies of a relation who had recently departed from that nether world.

Now, I had never seen a burial-place or cemetery amongst this people, and, glad to seize even so melancholy an occasion to defer an encounter with Zee, I asked Aph-Lin if I might be permitted to witness with him the interment of his relation; unless, indeed, it were regarded as one of those sacred ceremonies to which a stranger to their race might not be admitted.

"The departure of an An to a happier world," answered my host, "when, as in the case of my^{*}kinsman, he has lived so long in this as to have lost pleasure in it, is rather a cheerful though quiet festival than a sacred ceremony, and you may accompany me if you will."

Preceded by the child-messenger, we walked up the main street to a house at some little distance, and, entering the hall, were conducted to a room on the ground floor, where we found several persons assembled round a couch on which was laid the deceased. It was an old man, who had, as I was told, lived beyond his 130th year. To judge by the calm smile on his countenance, he had passed away without suffering. One of the sons, who was now the head of the family, and who seemed in vigorous middle life, though he was considerably more than seventy, stepped forward with a cheerful face and told Aph-Lin "that the day before he died his father had seen in a dream his departed Gy, and was eager to be reunited to her, and restored to youth beneath the nearer smile of the All-Good."

While these two were talking, my attention was drawn to a dark metallic substance at the farther end of the room. It was about twenty feet in length, narrow in proportion, and all closed round, save, near the roof, there were small round holes through which might be seen a red light. From the interior emanated a rich and sweet perfume; and while I was conjecturing what purpose this machine was to serve, all the timepieces in the town struck the hour with their solemn musical chime; and as that sound ceased, music of a more joyous char-

acter, but still of a joy subdued and tranquil, rang throughout the chamber, and from the walls beyond, in a choral peal. Symphonious with the melody, those present lifted their voices in chant. The words of this hymn were simple. They expressed no regret, no farewell, but rather a greeting to the new world whither the deceased had preceded the living. Indeed, in their language, the funeral hymn is called the "Birth Song." Then the corpse, covered by a long cerement, was tenderly lifted up by six of the nearest kinsfolk and borne toward the dark thing I have described. I pressed forward to see what happened. A sliding door or panel at one end was lifted up—the body deposited within, on a shelf—the door reclosed—a spring at the side touched—a sudden *whishing*, sighing sound heard from within; and lo! at the other end of the machine the lid fell down, and a small handful of smouldering dust dropped into a *patera* placed to receive it. The son took up the *patera* and said (in what I understood afterward was the usual form of words), "Behold how great is the Maker! To this little dust He gave form and life and soul. It needs not this little dust for Him to renew form and life and soul to the beloved one we shall soon see again."

Each present bowed his head and pressed his hand to his heart. Then a young female child opened a small door within the wall, and I perceived, in the recess, shelves on which were placed many *patera* like that which the son held, save that they all had covers. With such a cover a Gy now approached the son, and placed it over the cup, on which it closed with a spring. On the lid were engraven the name of the deceased, and these words: "Lent to us" (here the date of birth). "Recalled from us" (here the date of death).

The closed door shut with a musical sound, and all was over.

CHAPTER XXV.

"AND this," said I, with my mind full of what I had witnessed—"this, I presume, is your usual form of burial?"

"Our invariable form," answered Aph-Lin. "What is it amongst your people?"

"We inter the body whole within the earth."

"What! to degrade the form you have loved and honored, the wife on whose breast you have slept, to the loathsomeness of corruption?"

"But if the soul lives again, can it matter whether the body waste within the earth or is reduced by that awful mechanism, worked, no doubt by the agency of *vril*, into a pinch of dust?"

"You answer well," said my host, "and there is no arguing on a matter of feeling; but to me your custom is horrible and repulsive, and would serve to invest death with gloomy and hideous associations. It is something, too, to my mind, to be able to preserve the token of what has been our kinsman or friend within the abode in which we live. We thus feel more sensibly that he still lives, though not visibly so to us. But our sentiments in this, as in all things, are created by custom. Custom is not to be changed by a wise *An*, any more than it is changed by a wise Community, without the gravest deliberation, followed by the most earnest conviction. It is only thus that change ceases to be changeability, and once made is made for good.

When we regained the house, *Aph-Lin* summoned some of the children in his service and sent them round to several of his friends, requesting their attendance that day, during the *Easy Hours*, to a festival in honor of his kinsman's recall to the *All-Good*. This was the largest and gayest assembly I ever witnessed during my stay among the *Ana*, and was prolonged far into the *Silent Hours*.

The banquet was spread in a vast chamber reserved especially for grand occasions. This differed from our entertainments, and was not without a certain resemblance to those we read of in the luxurious age of the Roman empire. There was not one great table set out, but numerous small tables, each appropriated to eight guests. It is considered that beyond that number conversation languishes and friendship cools. The *Ana* never laugh loud, as I have before observed, but the cheerful ring of their voices at the various tables betokened gayety of intercourse. As they have no stimulant drinks, and are temperate in food, though so choice and dainty, the banquet itself did not last long. The tables sank through the floor, and then came musical enter-

tainments for those who liked them. Many, however, wandered away:—some of the younger ascended in their wings, for the hall was roofless, forming aerial dances; others strolled through the various apartments, examining the curiosities with which they were stored, or formed themselves into groups for various games, the favorite of which is a complicated kind of chess played by eight persons. I mixed with the crowd, but was prevented joining in the conversation by the constant companionship of one or the other of my host's sons, appointed to keep me from obtrusive questionings. The guests, however, noticed me but slightly; they had grown accustomed to my appearance, seeing me so often in the streets, and I had ceased to excite much curiosity.

To my great delight Zee avoided me, and evidently sought to excite my jealousy by marked attentions to a very handsome young An, who (though, as is the modest custom of the males when addressed by females, he answered with downcast eyes and blushing cheeks, and was demure and shy as young ladies new to the world are in most civilized countries, except England and America) was evidently much charmed by the tall Gy, and ready to falter a bashful "Yes" if she had actually proposed. Fervently hoping that she would, and more and more averse to the idea of reduction to a cinder after I had seen the rapidity with which a human body can be hurried into a pinch of dust, I amused myself by watching the manners of the other young people. I had the satisfaction of observing that Zee was no singular asserter of a female's most valued rights. Wherever I turned my eyes, or lent my ears, it seemed to me that the Gy was the wooing party, and the An the coy and reluctant one. The pretty innocent airs which an An gave himself on being thus courted, the dexterity with which he evaded direct answers to professions of attachment, or turned into jest the flattering compliments addressed to him, would have done honor to the most accomplished coquette. Both my male *chaperons* were subjected greatly to these seductive influences, and both acquitted themselves with wonderful honor to their tact and self-control.

I said to the elder son, who preferred mechanical employments to the management of a great property, and who was of an eminently philosophical temperament:

"I find it difficult to conceive how at your age, and with all the intoxicating effects, on the senses, of music and lights and perfumes, you can be so cold to that impassioned Gy who has just left you with tears in her eyes at your cruelty."

The young An replied with a sigh, "Gentle Tish, the greatest misfortune in life is to marry one Gy if you are in love with another."

"Oh! you are in love with another?"

"Alas! yes."

"And she does not return your love?"

"I don't know. Sometimes a look, a tone, makes me hope so; but she has never plainly told me that she loves me."

"Have you not whispered in her own ear that you love her?"

"Fie! what are you thinking of? What world do you come from? Could I so betray the dignity of my sex? Could I be so un-Anly—so lost to shame, as to own love to a Gy who has not first owned hers to me?"

"Pardon: I was not quite aware that you pushed the modesty of your sex so far. But does no An ever say to a Gy, 'I love you,' till she says it first to him?"

"I can't say that no An has ever done so, but if he ever does, he is disgraced in the eyes of the Ana, and secretly despised by the Gy-ei. No Gy, well brought up, would listen to him; she would consider that he audaciously infringed on the rights of her sex, while outraging the modesty which dignifies his own. It is very provoking," continued the An, "for she whom I love has certainly courted no one else, and I cannot but think she likes me. Sometimes I suspect that she does not court me because she fears I would ask some unreasonable settlement as to the surrender of her rights. But if so, she cannot really love me, for where a Gy really loves she foregoes all rights."

"Is this young Gy present?"

"Oh, yes. She sits yonder talking to my mother."

I looked in the direction to which my eyes were thus guided, and saw a Gy dressed in robes of bright red, which among this people is a sign that a Gy as yet prefers a single state. She wears gray, a neutral tint, to indicate that she is looking about for a spouse; dark purple if she wishes to intimate that she has made a choice;

purple and orange when she is betrothed or married; light blue when she is divorced or a widow, and would marry again. Light blue is of course seldom seen.

Among a people where all are of so high a type of beauty, it is difficult to single out one as peculiarly handsome. My young friend's choice seemed to me to possess the average of good looks; but there was an expression in her face that pleased me more than did the faces of the young Gy-ei generally, because it looked less bold—less conscious of female rights. I observed that, while she talked to Bra, she glanced, from time to time, sidelong at my young friend.

"Courage," said I; "that young Gy loves you."

"Ay, but if she will not say so, how am I the better for her love?"

"Your mother is aware of your attachment?"

"Perhaps so. I never owned it to her. It would be un-Anly to confide such weakness to a mother. I have told my father; he may have told it again to his wife."

"Will you permit me to quit you for a moment and glide behind your mother and your beloved? I am sure they are talking about you. Do not hesitate. I promise that I will not allow myself to be questioned till I rejoin you."

The young An pressed his hand on his heart, touched me lightly on the head, and allowed me to quit his side. I stole unobserved behind his mother and his beloved. I overheard their talk.

Bra was speaking; said she: "There can be no doubt of this: either my son, who is of marriageable age, will be decoyed into marriage with one of his many suitors, or he will join those who emigrate to a distance and we shall see him no more. If you really care for him, my dear Lo, you should propose."

"I do care for him, Bra; but I doubt if I could really ever win his affections. He is fond of his inventions and timepieces; and I am not like Zee, but so dull that I fear I could not enter into his favorite pursuits, and then he would get tired of me, and at the end of three years divorce me, and I could never marry another—never."

"It is not necessary to know about timepieces to know how to be so necessary to the happiness of an An, who cares for timepieces, that he would rather give up the timepieces than divorce his Gy. You see, my dear Lo,"

continued Bra, "that precisely because we are the stronger sex, we rule the other, provided we never show our strength. If you were superior to my son in making timepieces and automata, you should, as his wife, always let him suppose you thought him superior in that art to yourself. The An tacitly allows the pre-eminence of the Gy in all except his own special pursuit. But if she either excels him in that, or affects not to admire him for his proficiency in it, he will not love her very long; perhaps he may even divorce her. But where a Gy really loves, she soon learns to love all that the An does."

The young Gy made no answer to this address. She looked down musingly, then a smile crept over her lips, and she rose, still silent, and went through the crowd till she paused by the young An who loved her. I followed her steps, but discreetly stood at a little distance while I watched them. Somewhat to my surprise, till I recollected the coy tactics among the Ana, the lover seemed to receive her advances with an air of indifference. He even moved away, but she pursued his steps, and, a little time after, both spread their wings and vanished amid the luminous space above.

Just then I was accosted by the chief magistrate, who mingled with the crowd, distinguished by no signs of deference or homage. It so happened that I had not seen this great dignitary since the day I had entered his dominions, and recalling Aph-Lin's words as to his terrible doubt whether or not I should be dissected, a shudder crept over me at the sight of his tranquil countenance.

"I hear much of you, stranger, from my son Taë," said the Tur, laying his hand politely on my bended head. "He is very fond of your society, and I trust you are not displeased with the customs of our people."

I muttered some unintelligible answer, which I intended to be an assurance of my gratitude for the kindness I had received from the Tur, and my admiration of his countrymen, but the dissecting-knife gleamed before my mind's eye and choked my utterance. A softer voice said, "My brother's friend must be dear to me." And looking up I saw a young Gy, who might be sixteen years old, standing beside the magistrate and gazing at me with a very benignant countenance. She had not come to her full growth, and was scarcely taller than my-

self (viz., about 5 feet 10 inches), and, thanks to that comparatively diminutive stature, I thought her the leveliest Gy I had hitherto seen. I suppose something in my eyes revealed that impression, for her countenance grew yet more benignant.

"Taë tells me," she said, "that you have not yet learned to accustom yourself to wings. That grieves me, for I should have liked to fly with you."

"Alas!" I replied, "I can never hope to enjoy that happiness. I am assured by Zee that the safe use of wings is a hereditary gift, and it would take generations before one of my race could poise himself in the air like a bird."

"Let not that thought vex you too much," replied this amiable Princess, "for, after all, there must come a day when Zee and myself must resign our wings forever. Perhaps when that day comes we might be glad if the An we chose was also without wings."

The Tur had left us, and was lost amongst the crowd. I began to feel at ease with Taë's charming sister, and rather startled her by the boldness of my compliment in replying "that no An she could choose would ever use his wings to fly away from her." It is so against custom for an An to say such civil things to a Gy till she has declared her passion for him, and been accepted as his betrothed, that the young maiden stood quite dumb-founded for a few moments. Nevertheless she did not seem displeased. At last recovering herself, she invited me to accompany her into one of the less crowded rooms and listen to the songs of the birds. I followed her steps as she glided before me, and she led me into a chamber almost deserted. A fountain of naphtha was playing in the centre of the room; round it were ranged soft divans, and the walls of the room were open on one side to an aviary in which the birds were chanting their artful chorus. The Gy seated herself on one of the divans, and I placed myself at her side. "Taë tells me," she said, "that Aph-Lin has made it the law* of his house that

* Literally "has said, In this house be it requested." Words synonymous with law, as implying forcible obligation, are avoided by this singular people. Even had it been decreed by the Tur that his College of Sages should dissect me, the decree would have ran blandly thus,—"Be it requested that, for the good of the community, the carnivorous Tish be requested to submit himself to dissection."

you are not to be questioned as to the country you come from or the reason why you visit us. Is it so?"

"It is."

"May I, at least, without sinning against that law, ask at least if the Gy-ei in your country are of the same pale color as yourself, and no taller?"

"I do not think, O beautiful Gy, that I infringe the law of Aph-Lin, which is more binding on myself than any one, if I answer questions so innocent. The Gy-ei in my country are much fairer of hue than I am, and their average height is at least a head shorter than mine."

"They cannot then be so strong as the Ana amongst you? But I suppose their superior vril force makes up for such extraordinary disadvantage of size?"

"They do not possess the vril force as you know it. But still they are very powerful in my country, and an An has small chance of a happy life if he be not more or less governed by his Gy."

"You speak feelingly," said Taë's sister, in a tone of voice half sad, half petulant. "You are married, of course?"

"No—certainly not."

"Nor betrothed?"

"Nor betrothed."

"Is it possible that no Gy has proposed to you?"

"In my country the Gy does not propose; the An speaks first."

"What a strange reversal of the laws of nature!" said the maiden, "and what want of modesty in your sex! But have you never proposed, never loved one Gy more than another?"

I felt embarrassed by these ingenuous questionings, and said, "Pardon me, but I think we are beginning to infringe upon Aph-Lin's injunction. This much only will I say in answer, and then, I implore you, ask no more. I did once feel the preference you speak of; I did propose, and the Gy would willingly have accepted me, but her parents refused their consent."

"Parents! Do you mean seriously to tell me that parents can interfere with the choice of their daughters?"

"Indeed they can, and do very often."

"I should not like to live in that country," said the Gy, simply; "but I hope you will never go back to it."

I bowed my head in silence. The Gy gently raised

my face with her right hand, and looked into it tenderly. "Stay with us," she said; "stay with us, and be loved."

What I might have answered, what dangers of becoming a cinder I might have encountered, I still tremble to think, when the light of the naphtha fountain was obscured by the shadow of wings; and Zee, flying through the open roof, alighted beside us. She said not a word, but, taking my arm with her mighty hand, she drew me away, as a mother draws a naughty child, and led me through the apartments to one of the corridors, on which, by the mechanism they generally prefer to stairs, we ascended to my own room. This gained, Zee breathed on my forehead, touched my breast with her staff, and I was instantly plunged into a profound sleep.

When I awoke some hours later, and heard the songs of the birds in the adjoining aviary, the remembrance of Taë's sister, her gentle looks and caressing words, vividly returned to me; and so impossible is it for one born and reared in our upper world's state of society to divest himself of ideas dictated by vanity and ambition, that I found myself instinctively building proud castles in the air.

"Tish though I be," thus ran my meditations—"Tish though I be, it is then clear that Zee is not the only Gy whom my appearance can captivate. Evidently I am loved by a PRINCESS, the first maiden of this land, the daughter of the absolute monarch whose autocracy they so idly seek to disguise by the republican title of chief magistrate. But for the sudden swoop of that horrible Zee, this royal lady would have formally proposed to me; and though it may be very well for Aph-Lin, who is only a subordinate minister, a mere commissioner of light, to threaten me with destruction if I accept his daughter's hand, yet a sovereign, whose word is law, could compel the community to abrogate any custom that forbids intermarriage with one of a strange race, and which in itself is a contradiction to their boasted equality of ranks.

"It is not to be supposed that his daughter, who spoke with such incredulous scorn of the interference of parents, would not have sufficient influence with her royal father to save me from the combustion to which Aph-Lin would condemn my form. And if I were exalted by such an alliance, who knows but what the monarch might

elect me as his successor? Why not? Few among this indolent race of philosophers like the burden of such greatness. All might be pleased to see the supreme power lodged in the hands of an accomplished stranger who has experience of other and livelier forms of existence; and, once chosen, what reforms I would institute! What additions to the really pleasant but too monotonous life of this realm my familiarity with the civilized nations above ground would effect! I am fond of the sports of the field. Next to war, is not the chase a king's pastime? In what varieties of strange game does this nether world abound? How interesting to strike down creatures that were known above ground before the Deluge! But how? By that terrible vril, in which, from want of hereditary transmission, I could never be a proficient? No, but by a civilized handy breech-loader, which these ingenious mechanicians could not only make, but no doubt improve; nay, surely I saw one in the museum. Indeed, as absolute king, I should discountenance vril altogether, except in cases of war. *Apropos* of war, it is perfectly absurd to stint a people so intelligent, so rich, so well armed, to a petty limit of territory sufficing for 10,000 or 12,000 families. Is not this restriction a mere philosophical crotchet, at variance with the aspiring element in human nature, such as has been partially, and with complete failure, tried in the upper world by the late Mr. Robert Owen? Of course one would not go to war with neighboring nations as well armed as one's own subjects; but then, what of those regions inhabited by races unacquainted with vril, and apparently resembling, in their democratic institutions, my American countrymen? One might invade them without offence to the vril nations, our allies, appropriate their territories, extending, perhaps, to the most distant regions of the nether earth, and thus rule over an empire in which the sun never sets. (I forgot, in my enthusiasm, that over those regions there was no sun to set.) As for the fantastical notion against conceding fame or renown to an eminent individual, because, forsooth, bestowal of honors insures contest in the pursuit of them, stimulates angry passions, and mars the felicity of peace—it is opposed to the very elements, not only of the human but the brute creation, which are all, if tamable, participators in the sentiment of praise and emulation. What renown would be given

to a king who thus extended his empire! I should be deemed a demigod." Thinking of that, the other fanatical notion of regulating this life by reference to one which, no doubt, we Christians firmly believe in, but never take into consideration, I resolved that enlightened philosophy compelled me to abolish a heathen religion so superstitiously at variance with modern thought and practical action. Musing over these various projects, I felt how much I should have liked at that moment to brighten my wits by a good glass of whisky-and-water. Not that I am habitually a spirit-drinker, but certainly there are times when a little stimulant of alcoholic nature, taken with a cigar, enlivens the imagination. Yes; certainly among these herbs and fruits there would be a liquid from which one could extract a pleasant vinous alcohol; and with a steak cut off one of those elks (ah! what offence to science to reject the animal food which our first medical men agree in recommending to the gastric juices of mankind!) one would certainly pass a more exhilarating hour of repast. Then, too, instead of those antiquated dramas performed by childish amateurs, certainly, when I am king, I will introduce our modern opera and a *corps de ballet*, for which one might find, among the nations I shall conquer, young females of less formidable height and thews than the Gy-ei—not armed with vril, and not insisting upon one's marrying them.

I was so completely rapt in these and similar reforms, political, social, and moral, calculated to bestow on the people of the nether world the blessings of a civilization known to the races of the upper, that I did not perceive that Zee had entered the chamber till I heard a deep sigh, and, raising my eyes, beheld her standing by my couch.

I need not say that, according to the manners of this people, a Gy can, without indecorum, visit an An in his chamber, though an An would be considered forward and immodest to the last degree if he entered the chamber of a Gy without previously obtaining her permission to do so. Fortunately I was in the full habiliments I had worn when Zee had deposited me on the couch. Nevertheless I felt much irritated, as well as shocked, by her visit, and asked in a rude tone what she wanted.

"Speak gently, beloved one, I entreat you," said she,

"for I am very unhappy. I have not slept since we parted."

"A due sense of your shameful conduct to me as your father's guest might well suffice to banish sleep from your eyelids. Where was the affection you pretended to have for me, where was even that politeness on which the Vril-ya pride themselves, when, taking advantage alike of that physical strength in which your sex, in this extraordinary region, excels our own, and of those detestable and unhallowed powers which the agencies of vril invest in your eyes and finger-ends, you exposed me to humiliation before your assembled visitors, before Her Royal Highness—I mean the daughter of your own chief magistrate—carrying me off to bed like a naughty infant, and plunging me into sleep, without asking my consent?"

"Ungrateful! Do you reproach me for the evidences of my love? Can you think that, even if unstung by the jealousy which attends upon love till it fades away in blissful trust when we know that the heart we have wooed is won, I could be indifferent to the perils to which the audacious overtures of that silly little child might expose you?"

"Hold! Since you introduce the subject of perils, it perhaps does not misbecome me to say that my most imminent perils come from yourself, or at least would come if I believed in your love and accepted your addresses. Your father has told me plainly that in that case I should be consumed into a cinder with as little compunction as if I were the reptile whom Taë blasted into ashes with the flash of his wand."

"Do not let that fear chill your heart to me," exclaimed Zee, dropping on her knees and absorbing my right hand in the space of her ample palm. "It is true, indeed, that we two cannot wed as those of the same race wed; true that the love between us must be pure as that which, in our belief, exists between lovers who reunite in the new life beyond that boundary at which the old life ends. But is it not happiness enough to be together, wedded in mind and in heart? Listen: I have just left my father. He consents to our union on those terms. I have sufficient influence with the College of Sages to insure their request to the Tur not to interfere with the free choice of a Gy, provided that her wedding with one of another

race be but the wedding of souls. Oh, think you that true love needs ignoble union? It is not that I yearn only to be by your side in this life, to be part and parcel of your joys and sorrows here: I ask here for a tie which will bind us forever and forever in the world of immortals. Do you reject me?"

As she spoke, she knelt, and the whole character of her face was changed; nothing of sternness left to its grandeur; a divine light, as that of an immortal, shining out from its human beauty. But she rather awed me as an angel than moved me as a woman, and after an embarrassed pause, I faltered forth evasive expressions of gratitude, and sought, as delicately as I could, to point out how humiliating would be my position amongst her race in the light of a husband who might never be permitted the name of father.

"But," said Zee, "this community does not constitute the whole world. No; nor do all the populations comprised in the league of the Vrilya. For thy sake I will renounce my country and my people. We will fly together to some region where thou shalt be safe. I am strong enough to bear thee on my wings across the deserts that intervene. I am skilled enough to cleave open, amidst the rocks, valleys in which to build our home. Solitude and a hut with thee would be to me society and the universe. Or wouldst thou return to thine own world, above the surface of this, exposed to the uncertain seasons, and lit but by the changeful orbs which constitute by thy description the fickle character of those savage regions? If so, speak the word, and I will force the way for thy return, so that I am thy companion there, though, there as here, but partner of thy soul, and fellow-traveller with thee to the world in which there is no parting and no death."

I could not but be deeply affected by the tenderness, at once so pure and so impassioned, with which these words were uttered, and in a voice that would have rendered musical the roughest sounds in the rudest tongue. And for a moment it did occur to me that I might avail myself of Zee's agency to effect a safe and speedy return to the upper world. But a very brief space for reflection sufficed to show me how dishonorable and base a return for such devotion it would be to allure thus away, from her own people and a home in which I had been so hos-

pitably treated, a creature to whom our world would be so abhorrent, and for whose barren, if spiritual love, I could not reconcile myself to renounce the more human affection of mates less exalted above my erring self. With this sentiment of duty toward the Gy combined another of duty toward the whole race I belonged to. Could I venture to introduce into the upper world a being so formidably gifted—a being that with a movement of her staff could in less than an hour reduce New York and its glorious Koom-Posh into a pinch of snuff? Rob her of one staff, with her science she could easily construct another; and with the deadly lightnings that armed the slender engine her whole frame was charged. If thus dangerous to the cities and populations of the whole upper earth, could she be a safe companion to myself in case her affection should be subjected to change or embittered by jealousy? These thoughts, which it takes so many words to express, passed rapidly through my brain and decided my answer.

"Zee," I said, in the softest tones I could command, and pressing respectful lips on the hand into whose clasp mine had vanished—"Zee, I can find no words to say how deeply I am touched, and how highly I am honored, by a love so disinterested and self-immolating. My best return to it is perfect frankness. Each nation has its customs. The customs of yours do not allow you to wed me; the customs of mine are equally opposed to such a union between those of races so widely differing. On the other hand, though not deficient in courage among my own people, or amid dangers with which I am familiar, I cannot, without a shudder of horror, think of constructing a bridal home in the heart of some dismal chaos, with all the elements of nature, fire and water and mephitic gases, at war with each other, and with the probability that at some moment, while you were busied in cleaving rocks or conveying vril into lamps, I should be devoured by a krek which your operations disturbed from its hiding-place. I, a mere Tish, do not deserve the love of a Gy, so brilliant, so learned, so potent as yourself. Yes, I do not deserve that love, for I cannot return it."

Zee released my hand, rose to her feet, and turned her face away to hide her emotions; then she glided noiselessly along the room, and paused at the threshold. Sud-

denly, impelled as by a new thought, she returned to my side and said, in a whispered tone:

"You told me you would speak with perfect frankness. With perfect frankness, then, answer me this question. If you cannot love me, do you love another?"

"Certainly I do not."

"You do not love Taë's sister?"

"I never saw her before last night."

"That is no answer. Love is swifter than *vril*. You hesitate to tell me. Do not think it is only jealousy that prompts me to caution you. If the Tur's daughter should declare love to you—if in her ignorance she confides to her father any preference that may justify his belief that she will woo you, he will have no option but to request your immediate destruction, as he is specially charged with the duty of consulting the good of the community, which could not allow a daughter of the *Vril-ya* to wed a son of the *Tish-a*, in that sense of marriage which does not confine itself to union of the souls. Alas! there would then be for you no escape. She has no strength of wing to uphold you through the air; she has no science wherewith to make a home in the wilderness. Believe that here my friendship speaks, and that my jealousy is silent."

With those words Zee left me. And recalling those words, I thought no more of succeeding to the throne of the *Vril-ya*, or of the political, social, and moral reforms I should institute in the capacity of Absolute Sovereign.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AFTER the conversation with Zee just recorded, I fell into a profound melancholy. The curious interest with which I had hitherto examined the life and habits of this marvellous community was at an end. I could not banish from my mind the consciousness that I was among a people who, however kind and courteous, could destroy me at any moment without scruple or compunction. The virtuous and peaceful life of the people which, while new to me, had seemed so holy a contrast to the contentions, the passions, the vices of the upper world, now began to oppress me with a sense of dullness and

monotony. Even the serene tranquillity of the lustrous air preyed on my spirits. I longed for a change, even to winter, or storm, or darkness. I began to feel that, whatever our dreams of perfectibility, our restless aspirations toward a better, and higher, and calmer sphere of being, we, the mortals of the upper world, are not trained or fitted to enjoy for long the very happiness of which we dream or to which we aspire.

Now, in this social state of the Vril-ya, it was singular to mark how it contrived to unite and to harmonize into one system nearly all the objects which the various philosophers of the upper world have placed before human hopes as the ideals of a Utopian future. It was a state in which war, with all its calamities, was deemed impossible—a state in which the freedom of all and each was secured to the uttermost degree, without one of those animosities which make freedom in the upper world depend on the perpetual strife of hostile parties. Here the corruption which debases democracies was as unknown as the discontents which undermine the thrones of monarchies. Equality here was not a name; it was a reality. Riches were not persecuted, because they were not envied. Here those problems connected with the labors of a working class, hitherto insoluble above ground, and above ground conducing to such bitterness between classes, were solved by a process the simplest—a distinct and separate working class was dispensed with altogether. Mechanical inventions, constructed on principles that baffled my research to ascertain, worked by an agency infinitely more powerful and infinitely more easy of management than aught we have yet extracted from electricity or steam, with the aid of children whose strength was never overtasked, but who loved their employment as sport and pastime, sufficed to create a Public-wealth so devoted to the general use that not a grumbler was ever heard of. The vices that rot our cities, here had no footing. Amusements abounded, but they were all innocent. No merry-makings conduced to intoxication, to riot, to disease. Love existed, and was ardent in pursuit, but its object, once secured, was faithful. The adulterer, the profligate, the harlot, were phenomena so unknown in this commonwealth, that even to find the words by which they were designated one would have had to search throughout an

obsolete literature composed thousands of years before. They who have been students of theoretical philosophies above ground, know that all these strange departures from civilized life do but realize ideas which have been broached, canvassed, ridiculed, contested for; sometimes partially tried, and still put forth in fantastic books, but have never come to practical result. Nor were these all the steps toward theoretical perfectibility which this community had made. It had been the sober belief of Descartes that the life of man could be prolonged, not, indeed, on this earth, to eternal duration, but to what he called the age of the patriarchs, and modestly defined to be from 100 to 150 years average length. Well, even this dream of sages was here fulfilled—nay, more than fulfilled; for the vigor of middle life was preserved even after the term of a century was passed. With this longevity was combined a greater blessing than itself—that of continuous health. Such diseases as befell the race were removed with ease by scientific applications of that agency—life-giving as life-destroying—which is inherent in vril. Even this idea is not unknown above ground, though it has generally been confined to enthusiasts or charlatans, and emanates from confused notions about mesmerism, odic force, etc. Passing by such trivial contrivances as wings, which every school-boy knows have been tried and found wanting, from the mythical or pre-historical period, I proceed to that very delicate question, urged of late as essential to the perfect happiness of our human species by the two most disturbing and potential influences on upper-ground society—Woman-kind and Philosophy. I mean the Rights of Women.

Now, it is allowed by jurisprudists that it is idle to talk of rights where there are not corresponding powers to enforce them; and above ground, for some reason or other, man in his physical force, in the use of weapons offensive and defensive, when it comes to positive personal contest, can, as a rule of general application, master women. But among this people there can be no doubt about the rights of women, because, as I have before said, the Gy, physically speaking, is bigger and stronger than the An; and her will being also more resolute than his, and will being essential to the direction of the vril force, she can bring to bear upon him, more potently than he on herself, the mystical agency which

art can extract from the occult properties of nature. Therefore all that our female philosophers above ground contend for as to rights of women, is conceded as a matter of course in this happy commonwealth. Besides such physical powers, the Gy-ei have (at least in youth) a keen desire for accomplishments and learning which exceeds that of the male; and thus they are the scholars, the professors—the learned portion, in short, of the community.

Of course, in this state of society the female establishes, as I have shown, her most valued privilege, that of choosing and courting her wedding partner. Without that privilege she would despise all the others. Now, above ground, we should not unreasonably apprehend that a female, thus potent and thus privileged, when she had fairly hunted us down and married us, would be very imperious and tyrannical. Not so with the Gy-ei: once married, the wings once suspended, and more amiable, complacent, docile mates, more sympathetic, more sinking their loftier capacities into the study of their husbands' comparatively frivolous tastes and whims, no poet could conceive in his visions of conjugal bliss. Lastly, among the more important characteristics of the Vrilya, as distinguished from our mankind—lastly, and most important on the bearings of their life and the peace of their commonwealths, is their universal agreement in the existence of a merciful beneficent Deity, and of a future world to the duration of which a century or two are moments too brief to waste upon thoughts of fame and power and avarice; while with that agreement is combined another—viz., since they can know nothing as to the nature of that Deity beyond the fact of His supreme goodness, nor of that future world beyond the fact of its felicitous existence, so their reason forbids all angry disputes on insoluble questions. Thus they secure for that state in the bowels of the earth what no community ever secured under the light of the stars—all the blessings and consolations of a religion without any of the evils and calamities which are engendered by strife between one religion and another.

It would be, then, utterly impossible to deny that the state of existence among the Vrilya is thus, as a whole immeasurably more felicitous than that of super-terrestrial races, and, realizing the dreams of our most sanguine philanthropists, almost approaches to a poet's con-

ception of some angelical order. And yet, if you would take a thousand of the best and most philosophical of human beings you could find in London, Paris, Berlin, New York, or even Boston, and place them as citizens in this beautiful community, my belief is, that in less than a year they would either die of *ennui*, or attempt some revolution by which they would militate against the good of the community, and be burnt into cinders at the request of the Tur.

Certainly I have no desire to insinuate, through the medium of this narrative, any ignorant disparagement of the race to which I belong. I have, on the contrary, endeavored to make it clear that the principles which regulate the social system of the Vril-ya forbid them to produce those individual examples of human greatness which adorn the annals of the upper world. Where there are no wars there can be no Hannibal, no Washington, no Jackson, no Sheridan; where states are so happy that they fear no danger and desire no change, they cannot give birth to a Demosthenes, a Webster, a Sumner, a Wendell Holmes, or a Butler; and where a society attains to a moral standard in which there are no crimes and no sorrows from which tragedy can extract its aliment of pity and sorrow, no salient vices or follies on which comedy can lavish its mirthful satire, it has lost the chance of producing a Shakespeare, or a Molière, or a Mrs. Beecher Stowe. But if I have no desire to disparage my fellow-men above ground in showing how much the motives that impel the energies and ambition of individuals in a society of contest and struggle—become dormant or annulled in a society which aims at securing for the aggregate the calm and innocent felicity which we presume to be the lot of beatified immortals—neither, on the other hand, have I the wish to represent the commonwealths of the Vril-ya as an ideal form of political society, to the attainment of which our own efforts of reform should be directed. On the contrary, it is because we have so combined, throughout the series of ages, the elements which compose human character, that it would be utterly impossible for us to adopt the modes of life or to reconcile our passions to the modes of thought among the Vril-ya, that I arrived at the conviction that ~~this~~ people—though originally not only of our human race, but, as seems to me clear by the roots of their lan-

guage, descended from the same ancestors as the Great Aryan family, from which in varied streams has flowed the dominant civilization of the world, and having, according to their myths and their history, passed through phases of society familiar to ourselves—had yet now developed into a distinct species with which it was impossible that any community in the upper world could amalgamate, and that if they ever emerged from these nether recesses into the light of day, they would, according to their own traditional persuasions of their ultimate destiny, destroy and replace our existent varieties of man.

It may, indeed, be said, since more than one Gy could be found to conceive a partiality for so ordinary a type of our super-terrestrial race as myself, that even if the Vrilya did appear above ground, we might be saved from extermination by intermixture of race. But this is too sanguine a belief. Instances of such *mesalliance* would be as rare as those of intermarriage between the Anglo-Saxon emigrants and the Red Indians. Nor would time be allowed for the operation of familiar intercourse. The Vrilya, on emerging, induced by the charm of a sunlit heaven to form their settlements above ground, would commence at once the work of destruction, seize upon the territories already cultivated, and clear off, without scruple, all the inhabitants who resisted that invasion. And considering their contempt for the institutions of Koom-Posh or Popular Government, and the pugnacious valor of my beloved countrymen, I believe that if the Vrilya first appeared in free America—as, being the choicest portion of the habitable earth, they would doubtless be induced to do—and said, “This quarter of the globe we take; Citizens of a Koom-Posh, make way for the development of species in the Vrilya,” my brave compatriots would show fight, and not a soul of them would be left in this life, to rally round the Stars and Stripes, at the end of a week.

I now saw but little of Zee, save at meals, when the family assembled, and she was then reserved and silent. My apprehensions of danger from an affection I had so little encouraged or deserved, therefore, now faded away, but my dejection continued to increase. I pined for escape to the upper world, but I racked my brains in vain for any means to effect it. I was never permitted to wander forth alone, so that I could not even visit the

spot on which I had alighted, and see if it were possible to reascend to the mine. Nor even in the Silent Hours, when the household was locked in sleep, could I have let myself down from the lofty floor in which my apartment was placed. I knew not how to command the automata who stood mockingly at my beck beside the wall, nor could I ascertain the springs by which were set in movement the platforms that supplied the place of stairs. The knowledge how to avail myself of these contrivances had been purposely withheld from me. Oh, that I could but have learned the use of wings, so freely here at the service of every infant; then I might have escaped from the casement, regained the rocks, and buoyed myself aloft through the chasm of which the perpendicular sides forbade place for human footing!

CHAPTER XXVII.

ONE day, as I sat alone and brooding in my chamber, Taë flew in at the open window and alighted on the couch beside me. I was always pleased with the visits of a child, in whose society, if humbled, I was less eclipsed than in that of Ana who had completed their education and matured their understanding. And as I was permitted to wander forth with him for my companion, and as I longed to revisit the spot in which I had descended into the nether world, I hastened to ask him if he were at leisure for a stroll beyond the streets of the city. His countenance seemed to me graver than usual as he replied, "I came hither on purpose to invite you forth."

We soon found ourselves in the street, and had not got far from the house when we encountered five or six young Gy-ei, who were returning from the fields with baskets full of flowers, and chanting a song in chorus as they walked. A young Gy-ei sings more often than she talks. They stopped on seeing us, accosting Taë with familiar kindness, and me with the courteous gallantry which distinguishes the Gy-ei in their manner toward our weaker sex.

And here I may observe that, though a virgin Gy is so frank in her courtship to the individual she favors, there

is nothing that approaches to that general breadth and loudness of manner which those young ladies of the Anglo-Saxon race, to whom the distinguished epithet of "fast" is accorded, exhibit toward young gentlemen whom they do not profess to love. No: the bearing of the Gy-ei toward males in ordinary is very much that of high-bred men in the gallant societies of the upper world toward ladies whom they respect but do not woo; deferential, complimentary, exquisitely polished—what we should call "chivalrous."

Certainly I was a little put out by the number of civil things addressed to my *amour propre*, which were said to me by these courteous young Gy-ei. In the world I came from, a man would have thought himself aggrieved, treated with irony, "chaffed" (if so vulgar a slang word may be allowed on the authority of the popular novelists who use it so freely), when one fair Gy complimented me on the freshness of my complexion, another on the choice of colors in my dress, a third, with a sly smile, on the conquests I had made at Aph-Lin's entertainment. But I know already that all such language was what the French call *banal*, and did but express in the female mouth, below earth, that sort of desire to pass for amiable with the opposite sex which, above earth, arbitrary custom and hereditary transmission demonstrate by the mouth of the male. And just as a high-bred young lady, above earth, habituated to such compliments, feels that she cannot, without impropriety, return them, nor evince any great satisfaction at receiving them, so I, who had learned polite manners at the house of so wealthy and dignified a Minister of that nation, could but smile and try to look pretty in bashfully disclaiming the compliments showered upon me. While we were thus talking, Taë's sister, it seems, had seen us from the upper rooms of the Royal Palace at the entrance of the town, and, precipitating herself on her wings, alighted in the midst of the group.

Singling me out, she said, though still with the inimitable deference of manner which I have called "chivalrous," yet not without a certain abruptness of tone which, as addressed to the weaker sex, Sir Philip Sidney might have termed "rustic," "Why do you never come to see us?"

While I was deliberating on the right answer to give

to this unlooked-for question, Taë said quickly and sternly, "Sister, you forget—the stranger is of my sex. It is not for persons of my sex, having due regard for reputation and modesty, to lower themselves by running after the society of yours."

This speech was received with evident approval by the young Gy-ei in general; but Taë's sister looked greatly abashed. Poor thing!—and a PRINCESS too!

Just at this moment a shadow fell on the space between me and the group; and, turning round, I beheld the chief magistrate coming close upon us, with the silent and stately pace peculiar to the Vrîl-ya. At the sight of his countenance, the same terror which had seized me when I first beheld it returned. On that brow, in those eyes, there was that same indefinable something which marked the being of a race fatal to our own—that strange expression of serene exemption from our common cares and passions, of conscious superior power, compassionate and inflexible as that of a judge who pronounces doom. I shivered, and, inclining low, pressed the arm of my child-friend, and drew him onward silently. The Tur placed himself before our path, regarded me for a moment without speaking, then turned his eye quietly on his daughter's face, and, with a grave salutation to her and the other Gy-ei, went through the midst of the group, still without a word.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEN Taë and I found ourselves alone on the broad road that lay between the city and the chasm through which I had descended into this region beneath the light of the stars and sun, I said under my breath, "Child and friend, there is a look in your father's face which appalls me. I feel as if, in its awful tranquillity, I gazed upon death."

Taë did not immediately reply. He seemed agitated, and as if debating with himself by what words to soften some unwelcome intelligence. At last he said, "None of the Vrîl-ya fear death: do you?"

"The dread of death is implanted in the breasts of the race to which I belong. We can conquer it at the call of

duty, of honor, of love. We can die for a truth, for a native land, for those who are dearer to us than ourselves. But if death do really threaten me now and here, where are such counteractions to the natural instinct which invests with awe and terror the contemplation of severance between soul and body?"

Taë looked surprised, but there was great tenderness in his voice as he replied, "I will tell my father what you say. I will entreat him to spare your life."

"He has, then, already decreed to destroy it?"

"'Tis my sister's fault or folly," said Taë, with some petulance. "But she spoke this morning to my father; and, after she had spoken, he summoned me, as a chief among the children who are commissioned to destroy such lives as threaten the community, and he said to me, 'Take thy vril staff, and seek the stranger who has made himself dear to thee. Be his end painless and prompt.'"

"And," I faltered, recoiling from the child—"and it is, then, for my murder that thus treacherously thou hast invited me forth? No, I cannot believe it. I cannot think thee guilty of such a crime."

"It is no crime to slay those who threaten the good of the community; it would be a crime to slay the smallest insect that cannot harm us."

"If you mean that I threaten the good of the community because your sister honors me with the sort of preference which a child may feel for a strange plaything, it is not necessary to kill me. Let me return to the people I have left, and by the chasm through which I descended. With a slight help from you I might do so now. You, by the aid of your wings, could fasten to the rocky ledge within the chasm the cord that you found, and have no doubt preserved. Do but that; assist me but to the spot from which I alighted, and I vanish from your world forever, and as surely as if I were among the dead."

"The chasm through which you descended! Look round; we stand now on the very place where it yawned. What see you? Only solid rock. The chasm was closed, by the order of Aph-Lin, as soon as communication between him and yourself was established in your trance, and he learned from your own lips the nature of the world from which you came. Do you not remember when Zee bade me not question you as to yourself or your

race? On quitting you that day, Aph-Lin accosted me, and said, 'No path between the stranger's home and ours should be left unclosed, or the sorrow and evil of his home may descend to ours. Take with thee the children of thy band, smite the sides of the cavern with your vril staves till the fall of their fragments fills up every chink through which a gleam of our lamps could force its way.'"

As the child spoke, I stared aghast at the blind rocks before me. Huge and irregular, the granite masses, showing by charred discoloration where they had been shattered, rose from footing to roof-top; not a cranny!

"All hope, then, is gone," I murmured, sinking down on the craggy wayside, "and I shall nevermore see the sun." I covered my face with my hands, and prayed to Him whose presence I had so often forgotten when the heavens had declared His handiwork. I felt His presence in the depths of the nether earth, and amidst the world of the grave. I looked up, taking comfort and courage from my prayers, and gazing with a quiet smile into the face of the child, said, "Now, if thou must slay me, strike."

Taë shook his head gently. "Nay," he said, "my father's request is not so formally made as to leave me no choice. I will speak with him, and I may prevail to save thee. Strange that thou shouldst have that fear of death which we thought was only the instinct of the inferior creatures, to whom the conviction of another life has not been vouchsafed. With us, not an infant knows such a fear. Tell me, my dear Tish," he continued, after a little pause, "would it reconcile thee more to departure from this form of life to that form which lies on the other side of the moment called 'death,' did I share thy journey? If so, I will ask my father whether it be allowable for me to go with thee. I am one of our generation destined to emigrate, when of age for it, to some regions unknown within this world. I would just as soon emigrate now to regions unknown, in another world. The All-Good is no less there than here. Where is He not?"

"Child," said I, seeing by Taë's countenance that he spoke in serious earnest, "it is crime in thee to slay me; it were a crime not less in me to say, 'Slay thyself.' The All-Good chooses His own time to give us life, and His

own time to take it away. Let us go back. If, on speaking with thy father, he decides on my death, give me the longest warning in thy power, so that I may pass the interval in self-preparation."

We walked back to the city, conversing but by fits and starts. We could not understand each other's reasonings, and I felt for the fair child, with his soft voice and beautiful face, much as a convict feels for the executioner who walks beside him to the place of doom.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN the midst of those hours set apart for sleep and constituting the night of the Vrîl-ya, I was awakened from the disturbed slumber into which I had not long fallen, by a hand on my shoulder. I started, and beheld Zee standing beside me.

"Hush," she said, in a whisper; "let no one hear us. Dost thou think that I have ceased to watch over thy safety because I could not win thy love? I have seen Taë. He has not prevailed with his father, who had meanwhile conferred with the three sages who, in doubtful matters, he takes into counsel, and by their advice he has ordained thee to perish when the world reawakens to life. I will save thee. Rise and dress.

Zee pointed to a table by the couch, on which I saw the clothes I had worn on quitting the upper world, and which I had exchanged subsequently for the more picturesque garments of the Vrîl-ya. The young Gy then moved toward the casement and stepped into the balcony, while hastily and wonderingly I donned my own habiliments. When I joined her on the balcony, her face was pale and rigid. Taking me by the hand, she said softly, "See how brightly the art of the Vrîl-ya has lighted up the world in which they dwell. To-morrow that world will be dark to me." She drew me back into the room without waiting for my answer, thence into the corridor, from which we descended into the hall. We passed into the deserted streets and along the broad upward road which wound beneath the rocks. Here, where there is neither day nor night, the Silent Hours are unutterably solemn, the vast 'space illumined by mortal skill is so wholly

without the sight or stir of mortal life. Soft as were our footsteps, their sounds vexed the ear, as out of harmony with the universal repose. I was aware in my own mind, though Zee said it not, that she had decided to assist my return to the upper world, and that we were bound toward the place from which I had descended. Her silence infected me, and commanded mine. And now we approached the chasm. It had been reopened; not presenting, indeed, the same aspect as when I had emerged from it, but, through that closed wall of rock before which I had last stood with Taë, a new cleft had been riven, and along its blackened sides still glimmered sparks and smouldered embers. My upward gaze could not, however, penetrate more than a few feet into the darkness of the hollow void, and I stood dismayed, and wondering how that grim ascent was to be made.

Zee divined my doubt. "Fear not," said she, with a faint smile; your return is assured. I began this work when the Silent Hours commenced and all else were asleep; believe that I did not pause till the path back into thy world was clear. I shall be with thee a little while yet. We do not part until thou sayest, 'Go, for I need thee no more.'"

My heart smote me with remorse at these words. "Ah!" I exclaimed, "would that thou wert of my race or I of thine, then I should never say, 'I need thee no more.'"

"I bless thee for those words, and I shall remember them when thou art gone," answered the Gy, tenderly.

During this brief interchange of words, Zee had turned away from me, her form bent and her head bowed over her breast. Now she rose to the full height of her grand stature, and stood fronting me. While she had been thus averted from my gaze, she had lighted up the circlet that she wore round her brow, so that it blazed as if it were a crown of stars. Not only her face and her form, but the atmosphere around, were illumined by the effulgence of the diadem.

"Now," said she, "put thine arms around me for the first and last time. Nay, thus; courage, and cling firm."

As she spoke her form dilated, the vast wings expanded. Clinging to her, I was borne aloft through the terrible chasm. The starry light from her forehead shot around and before us through the darkness. Brightly

and steadfastly, and swiftly as an angel may soar heavenward with the soul it rescues from the grave, went the flight of the Gy, till I heard in the distance the hum of human voices, the sounds of human toil. We halted on the flooring of one of the galleries of the mine, and beyond, in the vista, burned the dim, rare, feeble lamps of the miners. Then I released my hold. The Gy kissed me on my forehead passionately, but as with a mother's passion, and said, as the tears gushed from her eyes, "Farewell forever. Thou wilt not let me go into thy world—thou canst never return to mine. Ere our household shake off slumber, the rocks will have again closed over the chasm, not to be reopened by me, nor perhaps by others, for ages yet unguessed. Think of me sometimes, and with kindness. When I reach the life that lies beyond this speck in time, I shall look round for thee. Even there, the world consigned to thyself and thy people may have rocks and gulfs which divide it from that in which I rejoin those of my race that have gone before, and I may be powerless to cleave way to regain thee as I have cloven way to lose."

Her voice ceased. I heard the swan-like sough of her wings, and saw the rays of her starry diadem receding far and farther through the gloom.

I sat myself down for some time, musing sorrowfully; then I rose and took my way with slow footsteps toward the place in which I heard the sounds of men. The miners I encountered were strange to me, of another nation than my own. They turned to look at me with some surprise, but finding that I could not answer their brief questions in their own language, they returned to their work and suffered me to pass on unmolested. In fine, I regained the mouth of the mine, little troubled by other interrogatories, save these of a friendly official to whom I was known, and luckily he was too busy to talk much with me. I took care not to return to my former lodging, but hastened that very day to quit a neighborhood where I could not long have escaped inquiries to which I could have given no satisfactory answers. I regained in safety my own country, in which I have been long peacefully settled, and engaged in practical business, till I retired on a competent fortune, three years ago. I have been little invited and little tempted to talk of the roving and adventures of my youth. Somewhat

disappointed, as most men are, in matters connected with household love and domestic life, I often think of the young Gy as I sit alone at night, and wonder how I could have rejected such a love, no matter what dangers attended it, or by what conditions it was restricted. Only, the more I think of a people calmly developing, in regions excluded from our sight and deemed uninhabitable by our sages, powers surpassing our most disciplined modes of force, and virtues to which our life, social and political, becomes antagonistic in proportion as our civilization advances—the more devoutly do I pray that ages may yet elapse before there emerge into sunlight our inevitable destroyers. Being, however, frankly told by my physician that I am afflicted by a complaint which, though it gives little pain and no perceptible notice of its encroachments, may at any moment be fatal, I have thought it my duty to my fellow-men to place on record these forewarnings of The Coming Race.

THE END.

LEILA;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF GRANADA.

BY

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART.



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LEILA:

OR,

THE SIEGE OF GRENADA.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENCHANTER AND THE WARRIOR.

It was the summer of the year 1491, and the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella invested the city of Grenada.

The night was not far advanced; and the moon, which broke through the transparent air of Andalusia, shone calmly over the immense and murmuring encampment of the Spanish foe, and touched with a hazy light the snow-capped summits of the Sierra Nevada, contrasting the verdure and luxuriance which no devastation of man could utterly sweep from the beautiful vale below.

In the streets of the Moorish city many a group still lingered. Some, as if unconscious of the beleaguering war without, were listening in quiet indolence to the strings of the Moorish lute or the lively tale of some Arabian improvisatore; others were conversing with such eager and animated gestures as no ordinary excitement

could wring from the stately calm habitual to every Oriental people. But the more public places, in which gathered these different groups, only the more impressively heightened the desolate and solemn repose that brooded over the rest of the city.

At this time, a man, with downcast eyes, and arms folded within the sweeping gown which descended to his feet, was seen passing through the streets alone, and apparently unobservant of all around him. Yet this indifference was by no means shared by the straggling crowds through which, from time to time, he musingly swept.

"God is great!" said one man, "it is the enchanter Almamen."

"He hath locked up the manhood of Boabdil el Chico with the key of his spells," quoth another, stroking his beard. "I would curse him if I dared."

"But they say that he hath promised that when man fails, the genii will fight for Grenada," observed a fourth, doubtingly.

"Allah Akbar! what is, is! what shall be, shall be!" said a fifth, with all the solemn sagacity of a prophet.

Whatever their feelings, whether of awe or execration, terror or hope, each group gave way as Almamen passed, and hushed the murmurs not intended for his ear. Passing through the Zacatin (the street which traversed the Great Bazar), the (so styled) enchanter ascended a narrow and winding street, and arrived at last before the walls that encircled the palace and fortress of the Alhambra.

The sentry at the gate saluted and admitted him in silence; and in a few moments his form was lost in the solitude of groves, amidst which, at frequent openings, the spray of Arabian fountains glittered in the moonlight, while above rose the castled heights of the Alhambra and on the right those Vermillion Towers, whose origin veils itself in the furthest ages of Phœnician enterprise.

Almamen paused and surveyed the scene.

"Was Aden more lovely?" he muttered; "and shall so fair a spot be trodden by the victor Nazarene? What matters? creed chases creed—race, race—until time comes back to its starting place, and beholds the reign restored to the eldest faith and the eldest tribe. The horn of our strength shall be exalted."

At these thoughts the seer relapsed into silence, and gazed long and intently upon the stars, as, more numerous and brilliant with every step of the advancing night, their rays broke on the playful waters, and tinged with silver the various and breathless foliage. So earnest was his gaze and so absorbed his thoughts, that he did not perceive the approach of a Moor, whose glittering weapons, and snow-white turban rich with emeralds, cast a gleam through the wood.

The new-comer was above the common size of his race, generally small and spare, but without attaining the lofty stature and large proportions of the more redoubted of the warriors of Spain. But in his presence and mien there was something which, in the haughtiest conclave of Christian chivalry, would have seemed to tower and command. He walked with a step at once light and stately, as if it spurned the earth; and in the carriage of the small erect head and stag-like throat there was that indefinable and imposing dignity which accords so well with our conception of a heroic lineage, and a noble though imperious spirit. The stranger approached Almamen, and paused abruptly when within a few steps of the enchanter. He gazed upon him in silence for some moments; and, when at length he spoke, it was with a cold and sarcastic tone.

"Pretender to the dark secrets," said he, "is it in the stars that thou art reading those destinies of men and nations which the prophet wrought by the chieftain's brain and the soldier's arm?"

"Prince," replied Almamen, turning slowly, and recognizing the intruder on his meditations, "I was but considering how many revolutions, which have shaken the earth to its center, those orbs have witnessed, unsympathizing and unchanged."

"Unsympathizing!" repeated the Moor: "yet thou believest in their effect upon the earth?"

"You wrong me," answered Almamen, with a slight smile; "you confound your servant with that vain race, the astrologers."

"I deemed astrology a part of the science of the two angels, Harut and Marut."*

* The science of magic. It was taught by the angels named in the text, for which offense they are still supposed to be confined in the

"Possibly; but I know not that science, though I have wandered at midnight by the ancient Babel."

"Fame lies to us, then," answered the Moor, with some surprise.

"Fame never made pretense to truth," said Almamen, calmly, and proceeding on his way; "Allah be with you, prince! I seek the king."

"Stay! I have just left his presence, and left him, I trust, with thoughts worthy of the sovereign of Grenada, which I would not have a stranger, and a man whose arms are not spears or shields, break in upon and disturb."

"Noble Muza," returned Almamen, "fear not that my voice will weaken the inspirations which thine hath breathed into the breast of Boabdil. Alas! if my council were heeded, thou wouldst hear the warriors of Grenada talk less of Muza and more of the king. But fate or Allah hath placed upon the throne of a tottering dynasty one who, though brave, is weak; though wise, a dreamer; and you suspect the adviser when you find the influence of nature on the advised. Is this just?"

Muza gazed long and sternly on the face of Almamen; then, putting his hand gently on the enchanter's shoulder, he said:

"Stranger, if thou playest us false, think that this arm hath cloven the casque of many a foe and will not spare the turban of a traitor!"

"And think thou, proud prince," returned Almamen, unquailing, "that I answer alone to Allah for my motives, and that against man my deeds I can defend!"

With these words, the enchanter drew his long robe round him, and disappeared amidst the foliage.

CHAPTER II.

THE KING WITHIN HIS PALACE.

In one of those apartments, the luxury of which is known only to the inhabitants of a genial climate (half

ancient Babel. There they may yet be consulted, though they are rarely seen.—*Yallal'odin Yahya*.—Sale's *Koran*.

chamber and half grotto), reclined a young Moor in a thoughtful and musing attitude.

The ceiling of cedar-wood, glowing with gold and azure, was supported by slender shafts of the whitest alabaster, between which were open arcades, light and graceful as the arched vineyards of Italy, and wrought in that delicate filigree-work common to the Arabian architecture ; through these arcades was seen at intervals the lapsing fall of waters, lighted by alabaster lamps ; and their tinkling music sounded with a fresh and regular murmur upon the ear. The whole of one side of this apartment was open to a broad and extensive balcony, which overhung the banks of the winding and moon-lighted Darro ; and in the clearness of the soft night might be distinctly seen the undulating hills, the woods, and orange groves, which still form the unrivaled landscapes of Grenada.

The pavement was spread with ottomans and couches of the richest azure, prodigally enriched with quaint designs in broideries of gold and silver ; and over that on which the Moor reclined, facing the open balcony, were suspended, on a pillar, the round shield, the light javelin, and the curving scimeter of Moorish warfare. So studded were these arms with jewels of rare cost, that they might alone have sufficed to indicate the rank of the evident owner, even if his own gorgeous vestments had not betrayed it. An open manuscript on a silver table lay unread before the Moor, as, leaning his face upon his hand, he looked with abstracted eyes along the mountain summits, dimly distinguished from the cloudless and far horizon.

No one could have gazed without a vague emotion of interest, mixed with melancholy, upon the countenance of the inmate of that luxurious chamber. There was in it much of that ineffable presentiment of doom and disaster which we think to recognize on the features of our own Charles the First.

Its beauty was singularly stamped with a grave and stately sadness, which was made still more impressive by its air of youth and the unwonted fairness of the complexion ; unlike the attributes of the Moorish race, the hair and curling beard were of a deep golden color, and on the broad forehead and in the large eyes was that settled and contemplative mildness which rarely softens the

swart lineaments of the fiery children of the sun. Such was the personal appearance of Boabdil el Chico, the last of the Moorish dynasty in Spain.

"These scrolls of Arabian learning," said Boabdil to himself, "what do they teach? to despise wealth and power; to hold the heart to be the true empire. This, then, is wisdom. Yet, if I follow these maxims, am I wise? Alas! the whole world would call me a driveler and a madman. Thus is it ever; the wisdom of the intellect fills us with precepts which it is the wisdom of action to despise. Oh, Holy Prophet! what fools men would be if their knavery did not eclipse their folly!"

The young king listlessly threw himself back on his cushions as he uttered these words, too philosophical for a king whose crown sat so loosely on his brow.

After a few moments of thought, that appeared to dissatisfy and disquiet him, Boabdil again turned impatiently round. "My soul wants the bath of music," said he; "these journeys into a pathless realm have wearied it, and the streams of sound supple and relax the travailed pilgrim."

He clapped his hands, and from one of the arcades a boy, hitherto invisible, started into sight; at a slight and scarce perceptible sign from the king the boy again vanished, and, in a few moments afterward, glancing through the fairy pillars and by the glittering waterfalls, came the small and twinkling feet of the maids of Araby. As, with their transparent tunics and white arms, they gleamed, without an echo, through that cool and voluptuous chamber, they might well have seemed the Peris of the Eastern magic, summoned to beguile the sated leisure of a youthful Solomon. With them came a maiden of more exquisite beauty, though smaller stature, than the rest, bearing the light Moorish lute, and a faint and languid smile broke over the beautiful face of Boabdil as his eyes rested upon her graceful form and the dark yet glowing luster of her Oriental countenance. She alone approached the king, timidly kissed his hand, and then, joining her comrades, commenced the following song, to the air and very words of which the feet of the dancing-girls kept time, while, with the chorus, rang the silver bells of the musical instrument which each of the dancers carried.

AMINE'S SONG.

I.

Softly, oh, softly glide,
 Gentle Music, thou silver tide,
 Bearing, the lull'd air along,
 This leaf from the Rose of Song!
 To its port in his soul let it float,
 The frail but the fragrant boat—
 Bear it, soft Air, along!

II.

With the burden of Sound we are laden,
 Like the bells on the trees of Aden,*
 When they thrill with a tinkling tone
 At the wind from the Holy Throne.
 Hark! as we move around,
 We shake off the buds of Sound—
 Thy presence, beloved, is Aden!

III.

Sweet chime that I hear and wake.
 I would, for my loved one's sake,
 That I were a sound like thee,
 To the depths of his heart to flee.
 If my breath had its senses bless'd,
 If my voice in his heart could rest,
 What pleasure to die like thee!

The music ceased; the dancers remained motionless in their graceful postures, as if arrested into statues of alabaster; and the young songstress cast herself on a cushion at the feet of the monarch, and looked up fondly, but silently, into his yet melancholy eyes, when a man, whose entrance had not been noticed, was seen to stand within the chamber.

He was about the middle stature; lean, muscular, and strongly though sparely built. A plain black robe, something in the fashion of the Armenian gown, hung long and loosely over a tunic of bright scarlet, girded by a broad belt, from the center of which was suspended a small golden key, while at the left side appeared the jeweled hilt of a crooked dagger. His features were cast in a larger and grander mold than was common among the Moors of Spain: the forehead was broad, massive, and singularly high, and the dark eyes of unusual size and brilliancy; his beard, short, black, and

*The Mohammedans believe that musical bells hang on the trees of Paradise, and are put in motion by a wind from the throne of God.

glossy, curled upward, and concealed all the lower part of the face save a firm, compressed, and resolute expression in the lips, which were large and full; the nose was high, aquiline, and well shaped; and the whole character of the head (which was, for symmetry, on too large and gigantic a scale as proportioned to the form) was indicative of extraordinary energy and power. At the first glance the stranger might have seemed scarce on the borders of middle age; but on a more careful examination, the deep lines and wrinkles marked on the forehead and round the eyes betrayed a more advanced period of life. With arms folded on his breast he stood by the side of the king, waiting in silence the moment when his presence should be perceived.

He did not wait long; the eyes and gestures of the girl nestled at the feet of Boabdil drew the king's attention to the spot where the stranger stood: his eye brightened when it fell upon him.

"Almamen," cried Boabdil, eagerly, "you are welcome." As he spoke he motioned to the dancing-girls to withdraw.

"May I not rest? Oh, core of my heart, thy bird is in its home," murmured the songstress at the king's feet.

"Sweet Amine," answered Boabdil, tenderly smoothing down her ringlets as he bent to kiss her brow, "you should witness only my hours of delight. Toil and business have naught with thee; I will join thee ere yet the nightingale hymns his last music to the moon." Amine sighed, rose, and vanished with her companions.

"My friend," said the king, when alone with Almamen, "your counsels often soothe me into quiet, yet in such hours quiet is a crime. But what do? how struggle? how act? Alas! at the hour of his birth rightly did they affix to the name of Boabdil the epithet of *El Zogoybi*.* Misfortune set upon my brow her dark and fated stamp ere yet my lips could shape a prayer against her power. My fierce father, whose frown was as the frown of Azrael, hated me in my cradle; in my youth my name was invoked by rebels against my will: imprisoned by my father, with the poison-bowl or the dagger hourly before my eyes, I was saved only by the artifice of my mother. When age and infirmity broke the

* The Unlucky.

iron scepter of the king, my claims to the throne were set aside, and my uncle, El Zagal, usurped my birthright. Amidst open war and secret treason I wrestled for my crown : and now, the sole sovereign of Grenada, when, as I fondly imagined, my uncle had lost all claim on the affections of my people by succumbing to the Christian king and accepting a fief under his dominion, I find that the very crime of El Zagal is fixed upon me by my unhappy subjects ; that they deem he would not have yielded but for my supineness. At the moment of my delivery from my rival, I am received with execration by my subjects, and, driven into this my fortress of the Alhambra, dare not venture to head my armies or to face my people ; yet am I called weak and irresolute when strength and courage are forbid me. And as the water glides from yonder rock, that hath no power to retain it, I see the tide of empire welling from my hands."

The young king spoke warmly and bitterly ; and, in the irritation of his thoughts, strode, while he spoke, with rapid and irregular strides along the chamber. Almamen marked his emotion with an eye and lip of rigid composure.

"Light of the faithful," said he, when Boabdil had concluded, "the powers above never doom man to perpetual sorrow or perpetual joy ; the cloud and the sunshine are alike essential to the heaven of our destinies ; and if thou hast suffered in thy youth, thou hast exhausted the calamities of fate, and thy manhood will be glorious and thine age serene."

"Thou speakest as if the armies of Ferdinand were not already around my walls," said Boabdil impatiently.

"The armies of Sennacherib were as mighty," answered Almamen.

"Wise seer," returned the king, in a tone half sarcastic and half solemn, "We, the Mussulmans of Spain, are not the blind fanatics of the eastern world. On us have fallen the lights of philosophy and science ; and if the more clear-sighted among us yet outwardly reverence the forms and fables worshiped by the multitude, it is from the wisdom of policy, not the folly of belief. Talk not to me, then, of thine examples of the ancient and elder creeds ; the agents of God for this world are now, at least, in men, not angels ; and if I wait till Ferdinand share the destiny of Sennacherib, I wait only till the

standard of the Cross wave above the Vermilion Towers."

"Yet," said Almamen, "while my lord the king rejects the fanaticism of belief, doth he reject the fanaticism of persecution. You disbelieve the stories of the Hebrews; yet you suffer the Hebrews themselves, that ancient and kindred Arabian race, to be ground to the dust, condemned and tortured by your judges, your informers, your soldiers, and your subjects."

"The base misers! they deserve their fate," answered Boabdil, loftily. "Gold is their god and the marketplace their country; amidst the tears and groans of nations, they sympathise only with the rise and fall of trade; and, the thieves of the universe! while their hand is against every other man's coffer, why wonder that they provoke the hand of every man against their throats? Worse than the tribe of Hanifa, who eat their god only in time of famine;* the race of Moisa† would sell the seven heavens for the dent‡ on the back of the date stone."

"Your laws leave them no ambition but that of avarice," replied Almamen; "and, as the plant will crook and distort its trunk to raise its head, through every obstacle, to the sun' so the mind of man twists and perverts itself, if legitimate openings are denied it, to find its natural element in the gale of power or the sunshine of esteem. These Hebrews were not traffickers and misers in their own sacred land when they routed your ancestors, the Arab armies of old, and gnawed the flesh from their bones in famine rather than yield a weaker city than Grenada to a mightier force than the holiday lords of Spain. Let this pass. My lord, who rejects the belief in the agencies of the angels, doth he still retain belief in the wisdom of mortal men?"

"Yes!" returned Boabdil, quickly; "for of the one I know naught, of the other mine own senses can be the judge. Almamen, my fiery kinsman, Muza, has this evening been with me. He hath urged me to reject the fears against my people, that chain my panting spirit

* The tribe of Hanifa worshiped a lump of dough.

† Moisa, Moses.

‡ A proverb used in the Koran, signifying the smallest possible trifle.

within these walls ; he hath urged me to gird on yonder shield and scimeter, and to appear in the Vivarambla at the head of the nobles of Grenada. My heart leaps high at the thought ! and, if I cannot live, at least I will die—a king !”

“It is nobly spoken,” said Almamen, coldly.

“You approve, then, my design ?”

“The friends of the king cannot approve the ambition of the king to die.”

“Ha !” said Boabdil, in an altered voice ; “thou thinkest, then, that I am doomed to perish in this struggle ?”

“As the hour shall be chosen, wilt thou fall or triumph.”

“And that hour ?”

“Is not yet come.”

“Dost thou read the hour in the stars ?”

“Let Moorish seers cultivate that frantic credulity ; thy servant sees but in the stars worlds mightier than this little earth, whose light would neither wane nor wink if earth itself were swept from the infinities of space.”

“Mysterious man !” said Boabdil, “whence, then, is thy power ? whence thy knowledge of the future ?”

Almamen approached the king, as he now stood by the open balcony.

“Behold !” said he, pointing to the waters of the Darro ; “yonder stream is of an element in which man cannot live or breathe ; above, in the thin and impalpable air, our steps cannot find a footing, the armies of all earth cannot build an empire. And yet, by the exercise of a little art, the fishes and the birds, the inhabitants of the air and the water, minister to our most humble wants, the most common of our enjoyments ; so is it with the true science of enchantment. Thinkst thou that, while the petty surface of the world is crowded with living things, there is no life in the vast center within the earth, and the immense ether that surrounds it ? As the fisherman snares his prey, as the fowler entraps the bird, so, by the art and genius of our human mind, we may thrall and command the subtler beings of realms and elements which our material bodies cannot enter, our gross senses cannot survey. This, then, is my lore. Of other worlds know I naught ; but of the

things of this world, whether men, or, as your legends term them, ghouls and genii, I have learned something. To the future, I, myself, am blind ; but I can invoke and conjure up those whose eyes are more piercing, whose natures are more gifted."

"Prove to me thy power," said Boabdil, awed less by the words than by the thrilling voice and the impressive aspect of the enchanter.

"Is not the king's will my law?" answered Almamen ; "be his will obeyed. To-morrow night I await thee."

"Where?"

Almamen paused a moment, and then whispered a sentence in the king's ear : Boabdil started and turned pale.

"A fearful spot!"

"So is the Alhambra itself, great Boabdil, while Ferdinand is without the walls and Muza within the city."

"Muza ! Darest thou mistrust my bravest warrior?"

"What wise king will trust the idol of the king's army? Did Boabdil fall to-morrow by a chance javelin in the field, whom would the nobles and the warriors place upon his throne? Doth it require an enchanter's lore to whisper to thy heart the answer in the name of 'Muza'?"

"Oh, wretched state ! oh, miserable king !" exclaimed Boabdil, in a tone of great anguish. "I never had a father ; I have now no people : a little while, and I shall have no country. Am I never to have a friend?"

"A friend ! what king ever had?" returned Almamen, dryly.

"Away, man, away !" cried Boabdil, as the impatient spirit of his rank and race shot dangerous fire from his eyes ; "your cold and bloodless wisdom freezes up all the veins of my manhood ! Glory, confidence, human sympathy, and feeling—your counsels annihilate them all. Leave me ! I would be alone."

"We meet to-morrow at midnight, mighty Boabdil," said Almamen, with his usual unmoved and passionless tones. "May the king live forever !"

The king turned, but his monitor had already disappeared. He went as he came, noiseless and sudden as a ghost.

CHAPTER III.

THE LOVERS.

WHEN Muza parted from Almamen, he bent his steps towards the hill that rises opposite the ascent crowned with the towers of the Alhambra, the sides and summit of which eminence were tenanted by the luxurious population of the city. He selected the more private and secluded paths ; and, half-way up the hill, arrived at last before a low wall of considerable extent, which girded the gardens of some wealthier inhabitant of the city. He looked long and anxiously round : all was solitary ; nor was the stillness broken, save as an occasional breeze from the snowy heights of the Sierra Nevada rustled the fragrant leaves of the citron and pomegranate, or as the silver tinkling of waterfalls chimed melodiously within the gardens. The Moor's heart beat high ; a moment more, and he had scaled the wall, and found himself upon a greensward, variegated by the rich colors of many a sleeping flower, and shaded by groves and alleys of luxuriant foliage and golden fruits.

It was not long before he stood beside a house that seemed of a construction anterior to the Moorish dynasty. It was built over low cloisters, formed by heavy and time-worn pillars, concealed, for the most part, by a profusion of roses and creeping shrubs : the lattices above the cloisters opened upon large gilded balconies, the super-addition of Moriscan taste. In one only of the casements a lamp was visible ; the rest of the mansion was dark, as if, save in that chamber, sleep kept watch over the inmates. It was to this window that the Moor stole, and, after a moment's pause he murmured rather than sung, so low and whispered was his voice, the following simple verses, slightly varied from an old Arabian poet :

SERENADE.

Light of my soul, arise, arise !
 Thy sister lights are in the skies ;
 We want thine eyes,
 Thy joyous eyes :

The Night is mourning for thine eyes !
 The sacred verse is on my sword,
 But on my heart thy name :
 The words on each alike adored ;
 The truth of each the same.
 The same :—alas ! too well I feel
 The heart is truer than the steel !
 Light of my soul, upon me shine ;
 Night wakes her stars to envy mine.
 Those eyes of thine,
 Wild eyes of thine,
 What stars are like those eyes of thine ?

As he concluded, the lattice softly opened, and a female form appeared on the balcony.

"Ah, Leila !" said the Moor, "I see thee, and I am blessed !"

"Hush !" answered Leila ; "speak low, nor tarry long ; I fear that our interviews are suspected ; and this," she added, in a trembling voice, "may, perhaps, be the last time we shall meet."

"Holy Prophet !" exclaimed Muza, passionately, "what do I hear ? Why this mystery ? Why cannot I learn thine origin, thy rank, thy parents ? Think you, beautiful Leila, that Grenada holds a house lofty enough to disdain the alliance of Muza Ben Abil Gazan ? And oh !" he added, sinking the haughty tones of his voice into accents of the softest tenderness, "if not too high to scorn me, what should war against our loves and our bridals ? For worn equally on my heart were the flower of thy sweet self, whether the mountain top or the valley gave birth to the odor and the bloom."

"Alas !" answered Leila, weeping, "the mystery thou complainest of is as dark to myself as thee. How often have I told thee that I know nothing of my birth or childish fortunes, save a dim memory of a more distant and burning clime, where, amidst sands and wastes, springs the everlasting cedar, and the camel grazes on stunted herbage, withering in the fiery air ? Then it seemed to me that I had a mother ; fond eyes looked on me, and soft songs hushed me into sleep."

"Thy mother's soul has passed into mine," said the Moor, tenderly.

Leila continued : "Borne hither, I passed from childhood into youth within these walls. Slaves minister to my slightest wish ; and those who have seen both state

and poverty, which I have not, tell me that treasures and splendor that might glad a monarch are prodigalized around me: but of ties and kindred know I little. My father, a stern and silent man, visits me but rarely; some times months pass, and I see him not; but I feel he loves me; and, till I knew thee, Muza, my brightest hours were in listening to the footsteps and flying to the arms of that solitary friend."

"Know you not his name?"

"Nor I nor any one of the household, save, perhaps, Ximen, the chief of the slaves, an old and withered man, whose very eye chills me into fear and silence."

"Strange!" said the Moor, musingly; "yet why think you our love is discovered or can be thwarted?"

"Hush! Ximen sought me this day: 'Maiden,' said he, 'men's footsteps have been tracked within the gardens; if your sire know this, you will have looked your last upon Grenada. Learn,' he added in a softer voice, as he saw me tremble, 'that permission were easier given to thee to wed the wild tiger than to mate with the loftiest noble of Morisca! Beware!' He spoke and left me. Oh, Muza!" she continued, passionately wringing her hands, "my heart sinks within me, and omen and doom rise dark before my sight!"

"By my father's head, these obstacles but fire my love; and I would scale to thy possession though every step in the ladder were the corpses of a hundred foes!"

Scarcely had the fiery and high-souled Moor uttered his boast, than, from some unseen hand amidst the groves, a javelin whirred past him, and, as the air it raised came sharp upon his cheek, half buried its quivering shaft in the trunk of a tree behind him.

"Fly, fly, and save thyself! Oh God, protect him!" cried Leila, and she vanished within the chamber.

The Moor did not wait the result of a deadlier aim: he turned, yet, in the instinct of his fierce nature, not from, but against his foe; the drawn scimeter in his hand, the half-suppressed cry of wrath trembling on his lips, he sprang forward in the direction whence the javelin had sped. With eyes accustomed to the ambuscades of Moorish warfare, he searched eagerly, yet warily, through the dark and sighing foliage. No sign of life met his gaze; and at length, grimly and reluctantly, he retraced his steps and left the demesnes; but, just

as he had cleared the wall, a voice, low, but sharp and shrill, came from the gardens.

"Thou art spared," it said, "but, haply, for a more miserable doom !"

CHAPTER IV.

THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

THE chamber into which Leila retreated bore out the character she had given of the interior of her home. The fashion of its ornament and decoration was foreign to that adopted by the Moors of Grenada. It had a more massive, and, if we may use the term, *Egyptian* gorgeousness. The walls were covered with the stuffs of the East, stiff with gold, embroidered upon ground of the deepest purple ; strange characters, apparently in some foreign tongue, were wrought in the tessellated cornices and on the heavy ceiling, which was supported by square pillars, round which were twisted serpents of gold and enamel, with eyes to which enormous emeralds gave a green and life-like glare. Various scrolls and musical instruments lay scattered upon marble tables, and a solitary lamp of burnished silver cast a dim and subdued light around the chamber. The effect of the whole, though splendid, was gloomy, strange and oppressive, and rather suited either to the cold climate of the Norman, or to the thick and cave-like architecture which of old protected the inhabitants of Thebes and Memphis from the rays of the African sun, than the transparent heaven and light pavilions of the graceful Orientals of Grenada.

Leila stood within this chamber, pale and breathless, with her lips apart, her hands clasped, her very soul in her ears ; nor was it possible to conceive a more perfect ideal of some delicate and brilliant peri captured in the palace of a hostile and gloomy genius. Her form was of the lightest shape consistent with the roundness of womanly beauty ; and there was something in it of that elastic and fawn-like grace which a sculptor seeks to embody in his dreams of a being more aerial than those of earth. Her luxuriant hair was dark indeed, but a

purple and glossy hue redeemed it from that heaviness of shade too common in the tresses of the Asiatics ; and her complexion, naturally pale, but clear and lustrous, would have been deemed fair even in the North. Her features, slightly aquiline, were formed in the rarest mold of symmetry, and her full rich lips disclosed teeth that might have shamed the pearl. But the chief charm of that exquisite countenance was in an expression of softness, and purity, and intellectual sentiment that seldom accompanies that cast of loveliness, and was wholly foreign to the voluptuous and dreamy languor of Moorish maidens ; Leila had been educated, and the statue had received a soul.

After a few minutes of intense suspense, she again stole to the lattice, gently unclosed it, and looked forth. Far, through an opening amidst the trees, she descried, for a single moment, the erect and stately figure of her lover darkening the moonshine on the sward, as now, leaving his fruitless search, he turned his lingering gaze toward the lattice of his beloved : the thick and interlacing foliage quickly hid him from her eyes ; but Leila had seen enough ; she turned within, and said, as grateful tears trickled down her cheeks, and she sank upon her knees on the piled cushions of the chamber, "God of my fathers ! I bless thee—he is safe !"

"And yet," she added, as a painful thought crossed her, "how may I pray for him ? we kneel not to the same Divinity ; and I have been taught to loathe and shudder at his creed ! Alas ! how will this end ? Fatal was the hour when he first beheld me in yonder gardens ; more fatal still the hour in which he crossed the barrier, and told Leila that she was beloved by the hero whose arm was the shelter, whose name was the blessing, of Grenada. Ah, me ! Ah, me !"

The young maiden covered her face with her hands, and sunk into a passionate reverie, broken only by her sobs. Some time had passed in this undisturbed indulgence of her grief, when the arras was gently put aside, and a man of remarkable garb and mien advanced into the chamber, pausing as he beheld her dejected attitude, and gazing on her with a look in which pity and tenderness seemed to struggle against habitual severity and sternness.

"Leila !" said the intruder.

Leila started, and a deep blush suffused her countenance ; she dashed the tears from her eyes, and came forward with a vain attempt to smile.

"My father, welcome !"

The stranger seated himself on the cushions, and motioned Leila to his side.

"These tears are fresh upon thy cheek," said he gravely ; "they are the witness of thy race ! our daughters are born to weep, and our sons to groan ; ashes are on the head of the mighty, and the Fountains of the Beautiful run with gall ! Oh ! that we could but struggle—that we could but dare—that we could raise up our heads, and unite against the bondage of the evil-doer ! It may not be—but one man shall avenge a nation !"

The dark face of Leila's father, well fitted to express powerful emotion, became terrible in its wrath and passion ; his brow and lip worked convulsively ; but the paroxysm was brief, and scarce could she shudder at its intensity ere it had subsided into calm.

"Enough of these thoughts, which thou, a woman and a child, are not formed to behold. Leila, thou hast been nurtured with tenderness and schooled with care. Harsh and unloving may I have seemed to thee, but I would have shed the best drops of my heart to save thy young years from a single pang. Nay, listen to me silently. That thou mightest one day be worthy of thy race, and that thine hours might not pass in indolent and weary lassitude, thou hast been taught the lessons of a knowledge rarely given to thy sex. Not thine the lascivious arts of the Moorish maidens, not thine their harlot songs and their dances of lewd delight ; thy delicate limbs were but taught the attitude that Nature dedicates to the worship of a God, and the music of thy voice was tuned to the songs of thy fallen country, sad with the memory of her wrongs, animated with the names of her heroes, holy with the solemnity of her prayers. These scrolls and the lessons of our seers have imparted to thee such of our science and our history as may fit thy mind to aspire and thy heart to feel for a sacred cause. Thou listenest to me, Leila ?"

Perplexed and wondering, for never before had her father addressed her in such a strain, the maiden answered with an earnestness of manner that seemed to content

the questioner ; and he resumed, with an altered, hollow, solemn voice :

"Then curse the persecutors ! Daughter of the great Hebrew race, arise and curse the Moorish task-master and spoiler !"

As he spoke the adjurer himself rose, lifting his right hand on high, while his left touched the shoulder of the maiden. But she, after gazing a moment in wild and terrified amazement upon his face, fell cowering at his knees ; and, clasping them imploringly, exclaimed, in scarce articulate murmurs :

"Oh, spare me ! spare me !"

The Hebrew, for such he was, surveyed her, as she thus quailed at his feet, with a look of rage and scorn ; his hand wandered to his poniard, he half unsheathed it, thrust it back with a muttered curse, and then deliberately drawing it forth, cast it on the ground beside her.

"Degenerate girl !" he said, in accents that vainly struggled for calm, "if thou hast admitted to thy heart one unworthy thought toward a Moorish infidel, dig deep and root it out, even with the knife, and to the death—so wilt thou save this hand from that degrading task."

He drew himself hastily from her grasp, and left the unfortunate girl alone and senseless.

CHAPTER V.

AMBITION DISTORTED INTO VICE BY LAW.

ON descending a broad flight of stairs from the apartment, the Hebrew encountered an old man, habited in loose garments of silk and fur, upon whose withered and wrinkled face life seemed scarcely to struggle against the advance of death, so haggard, wan, and corpse-like was his aspect.

"Ximen," said the Israelite, "trusty and beloved servant, follow me to the cavern." He did not tarry for an answer, but continued his way with rapid strides through

various courts and alleys, till he came at length into a narrow, dark, and damp gallery, that seemed cut from the living rock. At its entrance was a strong grate, which gave way to the Hebrew's touch upon the spring, though the united strength of a hundred men could not have moved it from its hinge. Taking up a brazen lamp that burned in a niche within it, the Hebrew paused impatiently till the feeble steps of the old man reached the spot; and then, reclosing the gate, pursued his winding way for a considerable distance, till he stopped suddenly by a part of the rock which seemed in no respect different from the rest; and so artfully contrived and concealed was the door which he now opened, and so suddenly did it yield to his hand, that it appeared literally the effect of enchantment when the rock yawned, and discovered a circular cavern, lighted with brazen lamps, and spread with hangings and cushions of thick furs. Upon rude and seemingly natural pillars of rock various antique and rusty arms were suspended; in large niches were deposited scrolls, clasped and bound with iron; and a profusion of strange and uncouth instruments and machines (in which modern science might, perhaps, discover the tools of chemical invention) gave a magical and ominous aspect to the wild abode.

The Hebrew cast himself on a couch of furs; and as the old man entered and closed the door, "Ximen," said he, "fill out wine—it is a soothing counselor, and I need it."

Extracting from one of the recesses of the cavern a flask and goblet, Ximen proffered to his lord a copious draught of the sparkling vintage of the Vega, which seemed to invigorate and restore him.

"Old man," said he, concluding the potation with a deep-drawn sigh, "fill to thyself—drink till thy veins feel young."

Ximen obeyed the mandate but imperfectly; the wine just touched his lips, and the goblet was put aside.

"Ximen," resumed the Israelite, "how many of our race have been butchered by the avarice of the Moorish kings since first thou didst set foot within the city?"

"Three thousand—the number was completed last winter by the order of Jusef, the vizier; and their goods and coffers are transformed into shafts and scimeters against the dogs of Galilee."

"Three thousand ; no more ! three thousand only ? I would the number had been tripled, for the interest is becoming due."

"My brother, and my son, and my grandson are among the number," said the old man, and his face grew more death-like.

"Their monuments shall be in hecatombs of their tyrants. They shall not, at least, call the Jews niggards in revenge."

"But pardon me, noble chief of a fallen people ; thinkst thou we shall be less despoiled and trodden under foot by yon haughty and stiff-necked Nazarenes than by the Arabian misbelievers?"

"Accursed, in truth, are both," returned the Hebrew ; "but the one promises more fairly than the other. I have seen this Ferdinand and his proud queen ; they are pledged to accord us rights and immunities we have never known before in Europe."

"And they will not touch our traffic, our gains, our gold?"

"Out on thee !" cried the fiery Israelite, stamping on the ground. "I would all the gold of earth were sunk into the everlasting pit ! It is this mean, and miserable, and loathsome leprosy of avarice that gnaws away from our whole race, the heart, the soul, nay, the very form of man ! Many a time, when I have seen the lordly features of the descendants of Solomon and Joshua (features that stamp the nobility of the Eastern world born to mastery and command) sharpened and furrowed by petty cares ; when I have looked upon the frame of the strong man bowed, like a crawling reptile, to some huckstering bargainer of silk and unguents ; and heard the voice that should be raising the battle-cry smoothed into fawning accents of base fear or yet baser hope, I have asked myself if I am indeed of the blood of Israel ! and thanked the great Jehovah that he hath spared me, at least, the curse that hath blasted my brotherhood into usurers and slaves."

Ximen prudently forbore an answer to enthusiasm which he neither shared nor understood ; but after a brief silence, turned back the stream of the conversation :

"You resolve, then, upon prosecuting vengeance on the Moors, at whatsoever hazard of the broken faith of these Nazarenes?"

"Ay, the vapor of human blood hath risen unto heaven, and, collected into thunder-clouds, hangs over the doomed and guilty city. And now, Ximen, I have a new cause for hatred to the Moors; the flower that I have reared and watched, the spoiler hath sought to pluck it from my hearth. Leila—thou hast guarded her ill, Ximen; and wert thou not endeared to me by thy very malice and vices, the rising sun should have seen thy trunk on the waters of the Darro."

"My lord," replied Ximen, "if thou, the wisest of our people, canst not guard a maiden from love, how canst thou see crime in the dull eyes and numbed senses of a miserable old man?"

The Israelite did not answer or seem to hear this deprecatory remonstrance. He appeared rather occupied with his own thoughts; and, speaking to himself, he muttered, "It must be so; the sacrifice is hard—the danger great: but here, at least, it is more immediate. It shall be done. Ximen," he continued, speaking aloud, "dost thou feel assured that even mine own countrymen, mine own tribe, know me not as one of them? Were my despised birth and religion published, my limbs would be torn asunder as an impostor, and all the arts of the Cabala could not save me."

"Doubt not, great master; none in Grenada, save thy faithful Ximen, know thy secret."

"So let me dream and hope. And now to my work, for this night must be spent in toil."

The Hebrew drew before him some of the strange instruments we have described, and took from the recesses in the rock several scrolls. The old man lay at his feet, ready to obey his behests, but, to all appearance, rigid and motionless as the dead, whom his blanched hue and shriveled form resembled. It was, indeed, as the picture of the enchanter at his work and the corpse of some man of old, revived from the grave to minister to his spells and execute his commands.

Enough in the preceding conversation has transpired to convince the reader that the Hebrew, in whom he has already detected the Almamen of the Alhambra, was of no character common to his tribe. Of a lineage that shrouded itself in the darkness of his mysterious people in their day of power, and possessed of immense wealth, which threw into poverty the resources of

Gothic princes, the youth of that remarkable man had been spent, not in traffic and merchandise, but travel and study.

As a child, his home had been in Grenada. He had seen his father butchered by the late king, Muley Abul Hassan, without other crime than his reputed riches ; and his body literally cut open to search for the jewels it was supposed he had swallowed. He saw, and, boy as he was, he vowed revenge. A distant kinsman bore the orphan to lands more secure from persecution ; and the art with which the Jews conceal their wealth, scattering it over various cities, had secured to Almamen the treasures the tyrant of Grenada had failed to grasp.

He had visited the greater part of the world then known, and resided for many years in the court of the sultan of that hoary Egypt which still retained its fame for abstruse science and magic lore. He had not in vain applied himself to such tempting and wild researches, and had acquired many of those secrets now, perhaps, lost forever to the world. We do not mean to intimate that he attained to what legend and superstition impose upon our faith as the art of sorcery. He could neither command the elements nor pierce the vail of the future ; scatter armies with a word, nor pass from spot to spot by the utterance of a charmed formula. But men who for ages had passed their lives in attempting all the effects that can astonish and awe the vulgar, could not but learn some secrets which all the more sober wisdom of modern times would search ineffectually to solve or to revive. And many of such arts, acquired mechanically (their invention often the work of a chemical accident), those who attained to them could not always explain nor account for the phenomena they created, so that the mightiness of their own deceptions deceived themselves : and they often believed they were the masters of the nature to which they were, in reality, but erratic and wild disciples. Of such was the student in that grim cavern. He knew himself an impostor, but yet he was, in some measure, the dupe, partly of his own bewildered wisdom, partly of the fervor of an imagination exceedingly high-wrought and enthusiastic. His own gorgeous vanity intoxicated him ; and, if it be a historical truth that the kings of the ancient world, blinded by their own power, had moments in which they

believed themselves more than men, it is not incredible that sages, elevated even above kings, should conceive a frenzy as weak, or, it may be, as sublime, and imagine that they did not claim in vain the awful dignity with which the faith of the multitude invested their faculties and gifts.

But, though the accident of birth, which excluded him from all field for energy and ambition, had thus directed the powerful mind of Almamen to contemplation and study, nature had never intended passions so fierce for the calm though visionary pursuits to which he was addicted. Amidst scrolls and seers, he had pined for action and glory; and, baffled in all wholesome egress by the universal exclusion which, in every land and from every faith, met the religion he belonged to, the faculties within him ran riot, producing gigantic but baseless schemes, which, as one after the other crumbled away, left behind feelings of dark misanthropy and intense revenge.

Perhaps, had his religion being prosperous and powerful, he might have been a skeptic; persecution and affliction made him a fanatic. Yet, true to that prominent characteristic of the old Hebrew race which made them look to a Messiah only as a warrior and a prince, and which taught them to associate all their hopes and schemes with worldly victories and power, Almamen desired rather to advance than to obey his religion. He cared little for its precepts, he thought little for its doctrines; but, night and day, he revolved his schemes for its earthly restoration and triumph.

At that time the Moors in Spain were far more deadly persecutors of the Jews than the Christians were. Amidst the Spanish cities on the coast, that merchant tribe had formed commercial connections with the Christians, sufficiently beneficial, both to individuals as to communities, to obtain them not only toleration, but something of personal friendship, wherever men bought and sold in the market-place. And the gloomy fanaticism which afterward stained the fame of the great Ferdinand, and introduced the horrors of the Inquisition, had not yet made itself more than fitfully visible. But the Moors had treated this unhappy people with a wholesale and relentless barbarity. At Grenada, under the reign of the fierce father of Boabdil—"that king with

the tiger heart"—the Jews had been literally placed without the pale of humanity ; and, even under that mild and contemplative Boabdil himself, they had been plundered without mercy, and, if suspected of secreting their treasures, massacred without scruple ; the wants of the state continued their unrelenting accusers—their wealth, their inexpiable crime.

It was in the midst of these barbarities that Almanen, for the first time since the day when the death-shriek of his agonized father rung in his ears, suddenly returned to Grenada. He saw the unmitigated miseries of his brethren, and heremembered and repeated his vow. His name changed, his kindred dead, none remembered, in the mature Almamen, the beardless child of Issacher the Jew. He had long, indeed, deemed it advisable to disguise his faith ; and was known throughout the African kingdoms but as the potent santou or the wise magician.

This fame soon lifted him, in Grenada, high in the councils of the court. Admitted to the intimacy of Muley Hassan, with Boabdil, and the queen mother, he had conspired against that monarch ; and had lived, at least, to avenge his father upon the royal murderer. He was no less intimate with Boabdil ; but, steeled against fellowship or affection for all men out of the pale of his faith, he saw, in the confidence of the king, only the blindness of a victim.

Serpent as he was, he cared not through what mire of treachery and fraud he trailed his baleful folds, so that, at last, he could spring upon his prey. Nature had given him sagacity and strength. The curse of circumstance had humbled, but reconciled him to the dust. He had the crawl of a reptile ; he had, also, its poison and its fangs.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LION IN THE NET.

It was the next night, not long before daybreak, that the King of Grenada abruptly summoned to his council Jusef, his vizier. The old man found Boabdil in great

disorder and excitement ; but he almost deemed his sovereign mad when he received from him the order to seize upon the person of Muza Ben Abil Gazan, and to lodge him in the strongest dungeon of the Vermilion Tower. Presuming upon Boabdil's natural mildness, the vizier ventured to remonstrate ; to suggest the danger of laying violent hands upon a chief so beloved ; and to inquire what cause should be assigned for the outrage.

The veins swelled like cords upon Boabdil's brow as he listened to the vizier, and his answer was short and peremptory.

"Am I yet a king, that I should fear a subject or excuse my will? Thou hast my orders; there are my signet and the firman : obedience or the bowstring!"

Never before had Boabdil so resembled his dread father in speech and air ; the vizier trembled to the soles of his feet, and withdrew in silence. Boabdil watched him depart ; and then, clasping his hands in great emotion, "Oh, lips of the dead ! ye have warned me ; and to you I sacrifice the friend of my youth."

On leaving Boabdil, the vizier, taking with him some of those foreign slaves of a seraglio who know no sympathy with human passion outside its walls, bent his way to the palace of Muza, sorely puzzled and perplexed. He did not, however, like to venture upon the hazard of the alarm it might occasion throughout the neighborhood, if he endeavored, at so unreasonable an hour, to force an entrance. He resolved, rather, with his train, to wait at a little distance, till, with the growing dawn, the gates should be unclosed and the inmates of the palace astir.

Accordingly, cursing his stars and wondering at his mission, Jusef and his silent and ominous attendants concealed themselves in a small copse adjoining the palace until the daylight fairly broke over the awakened city. He then passed into the palace, and was conducted to a hall, where he found the renowned Moslem already astir, and conferring with some zegri captains upon the tactics of a sortie designed for that day.

It was with so evident a reluctance and apprehension that Jusef approached the prince, that the fierce and quick-sighted zegris instantly suspected some evil intention in his visit ; and when Muza, in surprise, yielded to the prayer of the vizier for a private audience, it was

with scowling brows and sparkling eyes that the Moorish warriors left the darling of the nobles alone with the messenger of their king.

"By the tomb of the prophet!" said one the zegrís, as he left the hall, "the timid Boabdil suspects our Ben Abil Gazan. I learned of this before."

"Hush!" said another of the band; "let us watch. If the king touch a hair of Muza's beard, Allah have mercy on his sins!"

Meanwhile the vizier, in silence, showed to Muza the firman and the signet; and then, without venturing to announce the place to which he was commissioned to conduct the prince, besought him to follow him at once. Muza changed color, but not with fear.

"Alas!" said he, in a tone of deep sorrow, "can it be that I have fallen under my royal kinsman's suspicion or displeasure? But no matter; proud to set to Grenada an example of valor in her defense, be it mine to set, also, an example of obedience to her king. Go on; I will follow thee. Yet stay, you will have no need of guards; let us depart by a private egress: the zegrís might misgive did they see me leave the palace with you at the very time the army are assembling in the Vivarambra and awaiting my presence. This way."

Thus saying, Muza, who, fierce as he was, obeyed every impulse that the Oriental loyalty dictated from a subject to a king, passed from the hall to a small door that admitted into the garden, and in thoughtful silence accompanied the vizier toward the Alhambra. As they passed the copse in which Muza, two nights before, had met with Almamen, the Moor, lifting his head suddenly, beheld fixed upon him the dark eyes of the magician as he emerged from the trees. Muza thought there was in those eyes a malign and hostile exultation; but Almamen, gravely saluting him, passed on through the grove: the prince did not deign to look back, or he might once more have encountered that withering gaze.

"Proud heathen!" muttered Almamen to himself, "thy father filled his treasures from the gold of many a tortured Hebrew; and even thou, too haughty to be the miser, hast been savage enough to play the bigot. Thy name is a curse in Israel; yet dost thou lust after the daughter of our despised race, and, could defeated passion sting thee, I were avenged. Ay, sweep on, with

thy stately step and lofty crest ; thou goest to chains, perhaps to death."

As Almamen thus vented his bitter spirit, the last gleam of the white robes of Muza vanished from his gaze. He paused a moment, turned away abruptly, and said half aloud, "Vengeance, not on one man only, but a whole race ! Now for the Nazarene."

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROYAL TENT OF SPAIN—THE KING AND THE DOMINICAN—THE VISITOR AND THE HOSTAGE.

OUR narrative now summons us to the Christian army, and to the tent in which the Spanish king held nocturnal counsel with some of his more confidential warriors and advisers. Ferdinand had taken the field with all the pomp and circumstance of a tournament rather than of a campaign ; and his pavilion literally blazed with purple and cloth of gold.

The king sat at the head of a table on which were scattered maps and papers ; nor in countenance and mien did that great and politic monarch seem unworthy of the brilliant chivalry by which he was surrounded. His black hair, richly perfumed and anointed, fell in long locks on either side of a high imperial brow ; upon whose calm though not unfurrowed surface the physiognomist would in vain have sought to read the inscrutable heart of kings. His features were regular and majestic ; and his mantle, clasped with a single jewel of rare price and luster, and wrought at the breast with a silver cross, waved over a vigorous and manly frame, which derived from the composed and tranquil dignity of habitual command that imposing effect which many of the renowned knights and heroes in his presence took from

loftier stature and ampler proportions. At his right hand sat Prince Juan, his son, in the first bloom of youth; at his left, the celebrated Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz; along the table in the order of their military rank, were seen the splendid Duke of Medina Sidonia, equally noble in aspect and in name; the worn and thoughtful countenance of the Marquis de Villena (the Bayard of Spain); the melancholy brow of the heroic Alonzo de Aguilar; and the gigantic frame, the animated features, and sparkling eyes of that fiery Hernando del Pulgar, surnamed "the knight of the exploits."

"You see, senores," said the king, continuing an address to which his chiefs seemed to listen with reverential attention, "our best hope of speedily gaining the city is rather in the dissensions of the Moors than our own sacred arms. The walls are strong, the population still numerous; and, under Muza Ben Abil Gazan, the tactics of the hostile army are, it must be owned, administered with such skill, as to threaten very formidable delays to the period of our conquest. Avoiding the hazard of a fixed battle, the infidel cavalry harass our camp by perpetual skirmishes; and in the mountain defiles our detachments cannot cope with their light-horse and treacherous ambuscades. It is true that, by dint of time, by the complete devastation of the Vega, and by vigilant prevention of convoys from the sea-towns, we might starve the city into yielding; but, alas! my lords, our enemies are scattered and numerous, and Grenada is not the only place before which the standard of Spain should be unfurled. Thus situated, the lion does not disdain to serve himself of the fox; and, fortunately, we have now in Grenada an ally that fights for us. I have actual knowledge of all that passes within the Alhambra; the king yet remains in his palace, irresolute and dreaming; and I trust that an intrigue, by which his jealousies are aroused against his general, Muza, may end either in the loss of that able leader, or in the commotion of open rebellion or civil war. Treason within Grenada will open its gates to us."

"Sire," said Ponce de Leon, after a pause, "under your counsels I no more doubt of seeing our banner floating above the Vermilion Towers than I doubt the rising of the sun over yonder hills; it matters little

whether we win by stratagem or force. But I need not say to your highness that we should carefully beware, lest we be amused by inventions of the enemy, and trust to conspiracies which may be but lying tales to blunt our sabers and paralyze our action."

"Bravely spoken, wise De Leon!" exclaimed Hernando del Pulgar, hotly; "and against these infidels, aided by the cunning of the Evil One, methinks our best wisdom lies in the sword-arm. Well says our Castilian proverb,

'Curse them devoutly,
Hammer them stoutly.'"

The king smiled slightly at the ardor of the favorite of his army, but looked round for more deliberate counsel.

"Sire," said Villena, "far be it from us to inquire the grounds upon which your majesty builds your hope of dissension among the foe; but, placing the most sanguine confidence in a wisdom never to be deceived, it is clear that we should relax no energy within our means, but fight while we plot, and seek to conquer while we do not neglect to undermine."

"You speak well, my lord," said Ferdinand, thoughtfully; "and you yourself shall head a strong detachment to lay waste the Vega. Seek me two hours hence; the council for the present is dissolved."

The knights rose, and withdrew with the usual grave and stately ceremonies of respect, which Ferdinand observed to and exacted from his court; the young prince remained.

"Son," said Ferdinand, when they were alone, "early and betimes should the infants of Spain be lessoned in the science of kingcraft. These nobles are among the brightest jewels of the crown; but still it is in the crown and for the crown that their light should sparkle. Thou seest how hot, and fierce and warlike are the chiefs of Spain; excellent virtues when manifested against our foes; but, had we no foes, Juan, such virtues might cause us exceeding trouble. By St. Jago, I have founded a mighty monarchy! observe how it should be maintained: by science, Juan, by science! and science is as far removed from brute force as this sword from a crowbar. Thou seemest bewildered and amazed, my son; thou

hast heard that I seek to conquer Grenada by dissensions among the Moors ; when Grenada is conquered, remember that the nobles themselves are a Grenada. Ave Maria ! blessed be the Holy Mother, under whose eyes are the hearts of kings."

Ferdinand crossed himself devoutly ; and then, rising, drew aside a part of the drapery of the pavilion, and called, in a low voice, the name of Perez. A grave Spaniard, somewhat past the verge of middle age, appeared.

"Perez," said the king, reseating himself, "has the person we expected from Grenada yet arrived ?"

"Sire, yes, accompanied by a maiden."

"He hath kept his word ; admit them. Ha, holy father ! thy visits are always as balsam to the heart."

"Save you, my son !" returned a man in the robes of a Dominican friar, who had entered suddenly and without ceremony by another part of the tent, and who now seated himself with smileless composure at a little distance from the king.

There was a dead silence for some moments ; and Perez still lingered within the tent, as if in doubt whether the entrance of the friar would not prevent or delay obedience to the king's command. On the calm face of Ferdinand himself appeared a slight shade of discomposure and irresolution, when the monk thus resumed :

"My presence, my son, will not, I trust, disturb your conference with the infidel, sith you deem worldly policy demands your parley with the men of Belial ?"

"Doubtless not—doubtless not," returned the king, quickly ; then, muttering to himself, "how wondrously doth this holy man penetrate into all our movements and designs !" he added, aloud, "let the messenger enter."

Perez bowed and withdrew.

During this time the young prince reclined in listless silence on his seat ; and on his delicate features was an expression of weariness which augured but ill of his fitness for the stern business to which the lessons of his wise father were intended to educate his mind. His, indeed, was the age, and his the soul, for pleasure ; the tumult of the camp was to him but a holiday exhibition ; the march of an army, the exhilaration of a spectacle ;

the court was a banquet, the throne the best seat at the entertainment. The life of the heir-apparent to the life of the king possessive is as the distinction between enchanting hope and tiresome satiety.

The small gray eyes of the friar wandered over each of his royal companions with a keen and penetrating glance, and then settled in the aspect of humility on the rich carpets that bespread the floor; nor did he again lift them till Perez, reappearing, admitted to the tent the Israelite Almamen, accompanied by a female figure, whose long vail, extending from head to foot, could conceal neither the beautiful proportions nor the trembling agitation of her frame.

"When last, great king, I was admitted to thy presence," said Almamen, "thou didst make question of the sincerity and faith of thy servant; thou didst ask me for a surety of my faith; thou didst demand a hostage; and didst refuse further parley without such pledge were yielded to thee. Lo! I place under thy kingly care this maiden—the sole child of my house—as surety of my truth; I intrust to thee a life dearer than my own."

"You have kept faith with us, stranger," said the king, in that soft and musical voice which well disguised his deep craft and his unrelenting will; "and the maiden whom you intrust to our charge shall be ranked with the ladies of our royal consort."

"Sire," replied Almamen, with touching earnestness, "you now hold the power of life and death over all for whom this heart can breathe a prayer or cherish a hope, save for my countrymen and my religion. This solemn pledge between thee and me I render up without scruple, without fear. To thee I give a hostage, *from* thee I have but a promise."

"But it is the promise of a king, a Christian, and a knight," said the king with dignity rather mild than arrogant; "among monarchs, what hostage can be more sacred? Let this pass; how proceed affairs in the rebel city?"

"May this maiden withdraw ere I answer my lord the king?" said Almamen.

The young prince started to his feet. "Shall I conduct this new charge to my mother?" he asked, in a low voice, addressing Ferdinand.

The king half smiled: "The holy father were a bet-

ter guide," he returned, in the same tone. But though the Dominican heard the hint, he retained his motionless posture; and Ferdinand, after a momentary gaze on the friar, turned away. "Be it so, Juan," said he, with a look meant to convey caution to the prince; "Perez shall accompany you to the queen; return the moment your mission is fulfilled—we want your presence."

While the conversation was carried on between the father and son, the Hebrew was whispering, in his sacred tongue, words of comfort and remonstrance to the maiden; but they appeared to have but little of the desired effect; and suddenly falling on his breast, she wound her arms around the Hebrew, whose breast shook with strong emotions, and exclaimed passionately, in the same language, "Oh, my father! what have I done? why send me from thee? why intrust thy child to the stranger? Spare me, spare me!"

"Child of my heart!" returned the Hebrew, with solemn but tender accents, "even as Abraham offered up his son, must I offer thee upon the altars of our faith; but oh, Leila! even as the angel of the Lord forbade the offering, so shall thy youth be spared, and thy years reserved for the glory of generations yet unborn. King of Spain!" he continued, in the Spanish tongue, suddenly and eagerly, "you are a father, forgive my weakness, and speed this parting."

Juan approached; and, with respectful courtesy, attempted to take the hand of the maiden.

"You," said the Israelite, with a dark frown. "Oh, king! the prince is young."

"Honor knoweth no distinction of age," answered the king. "What ho, Perez! accompany this maiden and the prince to the queen's pavilion."

The sight of the sober years and grave countenance of the attendant seemed to re-assure the Hebrew. He strained Leila in his arms; printed a kiss upon her forehead without removing her vail; and then, placing her almost in the arms of Perez, turned away to the farther end of the tent, and concealed his face with his hands. The king appeared touched; but the Dominican gazed upon the whole scene with a sour scowl.

Leila still paused for a moment; and then, as if recovering her self-possession, said aloud and distinctly, "Man deserts me; but I will not forget that God is over all."

Shaking off the hand of the Spaniard, she continued, "Lead on; I follow thee!" and left the tent with a steady and even majestic step.

"And now," said the king, when alone with the Dominican and Almamen, "how proceed our hopes?"

"Boabdil," replied the Israelite, "is aroused against both his army and their leader Muza; the king will not leave the Alhambra; and this morning, ere I left the city Muza himself was in the prisons of the palace."

"How!" cried the king, starting from his seat.

"This is my work," pursued the Hebrew, coldly. "It is these hands that are shaping for Ferdinand of Spain the keys of Grenada."

"And right kingly shall be your guerdon," said the Spanish monarch; "meanwhile, accept this earnest of our favor."

So saying, he took from his breast a chain of massive gold, the links of which were curiously inwrought with gems, and extended it to the Israelite. Almamen moved not. A dark flush upon the countenance bespoke the feelings he with difficulty restrained.

"I sell not my foes for gold, great king," said he, with a stern smile; "I sell my foes to buy the ransom of my friends."

"Churlish!" said Ferdinand, offended; "but speak on, man! speak on!"

"If I place Grenada, ere two weeks are passed, within thy power, what shall be my reward?"

"Thou didst talk to me, when last we met, of immunities to the Jews."

The calm Dominican looked up as the king spoke, crossed himself, and resumed his attitude of humility.

"I demand for the people of Israel," returned Almamen, "free leave to trade and abide within the city, and follow their callings, subjected only to the same laws and the same imposts as the Christian population."

"The same laws and the same imposts! Humph! there are difficulties in the concession. If we refuse?"

"Our treaty is ended. Give me back the maiden; you will have no further need of the hostage you demanded; I return to the city, and renew our interviews no more."

Politically and cold-blooded as was the temperament of the great Ferdinand, he had yet the imperious and haughty

nature of a prosperous and long-descended king; and he bit his lip in deep displeasure at the tone of the dictatorial and stately stranger.

"Thou usest plain language, my friend," said he; "my words can be as rudely spoken. Thou art in my power, and canst return not save at my permission."

"I have your royal word, sire, for free entrance and safe egress," answered Almamen. "Break it, and Grenada is with the Moors till the Darro runs red with the blood of her heroes, and her people strew the vales as the leaves in autumn."

"Art thou, then, thyself of the Jewish faith?" asked the king. "If thou art not, wherefore are the outcasts of the world so dear to thee?"

"My fathers were of that creed, royal Ferdinand; and if I myself desert their creed, I do not desert their cause. Oh, king! are my terms scorned or accepted?"

"I accept them: provided, first, that thou obtainest the exile or death of Muza; secondly, that within two weeks of this date, thou bringest me, along with the chief councilors of Grenada, the written treaty of the capitulation and the keys of the city. Do this, and, though the sole king in Christendom who dares the hazard, I offer to the Israelites throughout Andalusia the common laws and rights of citizens of Spain; and to thee I will accord such dignity as may content thy ambition."

The Hebrew bowed reverently, and drew from his breast a scroll, which he placed on the table before the king.

"This writing, mighty Ferdinand, contains the articles of our compact."

"How, knave! wouldst thou have us commit our royal signature to conditions with such as thou art, to the chance of the public eye? The king's word is the king's bond!"

The Hebrew took up the scroll with imperturbable composure. "My child!" said he; "will your majesty summon back my child? we would depart."

"A sturdy mendicant this, by the Virgin!" muttered the king; and then, speaking aloud, "Give me the paper, I will scan it."

Running his eyes hastily over the words, Ferdinand paused a moment, and then drew toward him the imple-

ments of writing, signed the scroll, and returned it to Almamen.

The Israelite kissed it thrice with Oriental veneration, and replaced it in his breast.

Ferdinand looked at him hard and curiously. He was a profound reader of men's characters, but that of his guest baffled and perplexed him.

"And how, stranger," said he, gravely, "how can I trust that man who thus distrusts one king and sells another?"

"Oh, king!" replied Almamen (accustomed from his youth to commune with and command the possessors of thrones yet more absolute): "oh king! if thou believest me actuated by personal and selfish interests in this our compact, thou hast but to make my service minister to my interest, and the lore of human nature will tell thee that thou hast won a ready and submissive slave. But if thou thinkst I have avowed sentiments less abject, and developed qualities higher than those of the mere bargainer for sordid power, oughtst thou not to rejoice that chance has thrown into thy way one whose intellect and faculties may be made thy tool? If I betray another, that other is my deadly foe. Dost not thou, the lord of armies, betray thine enemy? the Moor is an enemy bitterer to myself than to thee. Because I betray an enemy, am I unworthy to serve a friend? If I, a single man, and a stranger to the Moor, can yet command the secrets of palaces, and render vain the counsels of armed men, have I not in that attested that I am one of whom a wise king can make an able servant?"

"Thou art a subtle reasoner, my friend," said Ferdinand, smiling gently. "Peace go with thee! our conference for the time is ended. What ho, Perez!"

The attendant appeared.

"Thou hast left the maiden with the queen?"

"Sire, you have been obeyed."

"Conduct this stranger to the guard who led him through the camp. He quits us under the same protection. Farewell! Yet stay; thou art assured that Muza Ben Abil Gazan is in the prisons of the Moor?"

"Yes."

"Blessed be the Virgin!"

"Thou hast heard our conference, Father Tomas?"

said the king, anxiously, when the Hebrew had withdrawn.

"I have, son."

"Did thy veins freeze with horror?"

"Only when my son signed the scroll. It seemed to me then that I saw the cloven foot of the tempter."

"Tush, father! the tempter would have been more wise than to reckon upon a faith which no ink and no parchment can render valid, if the Church absolve the compact. Thou understandest me, father?"

"I do. I know your pious heart and well-judging mind."

"Thou wert right," resumed the king, musingly, "when thou didst tell us that these caitiff Jews were waxing strong in the fatness of their substance. They would have equal laws—the insolent blasphemers."

"Son," said the Dominican, with earnest adjuration, "God, who hath prospered your arms and councils, will require at your hands an account of the power intrusted to you. Shall there be no difference between his friends and his foes—his disciples and his crucifiers?"

"Priest," said the king, laying his hand on the monk's shoulder, and with a saturnine smile upon his countenance, "were religion silent in this matter, policy has a voice loud enough to make itself heard. The Jews demand equal rights: when men demand equality with their masters, treason is at work, and justice sharpens her sword. Equality! these wealthy usurers! Sacred Virgin! they would soon be buying up our kingdoms."

The Dominican gazed hard on the king. "Son, I trust thee," he said, in a low voice, and glided from the tent.

CHAPTER II.

THE AMBUSH, THE STRIFE AND THE CAPTURE.

THE day was slowly breaking over the wide valley of Grenada as Almamen pursued his circuitous and solitary path back to the city. He was now in a dark and entangled hollow, covered with brakes and bushes, from

amidst which tall forest trees arose in frequent intervals, gloomy and breathless in the still morning air. As, emerging from this jungle, if so it may be called, the towers of Grenada gleamed upon him, a human countenance peered from the shade, and Almamen started to see two dark eyes fixed upon his own.

He halted abruptly and put his hand on his dagger, when a low, sharp whistle from the apparition before him was answered around, behind; and, ere he could draw breath, the Israelite was begirt by a group of Moors in the garb of peasants.

"Well, my masters," said Almamen, calmly, as he encountered the wild, savage countenances that glared upon him, "think you that there is aught to fear from the solitary santón?"

"It is the magician," whispered one man to his neighbor; "let him pass."

"Nay," was the answer, "take him before the captain; we have orders to seize on all we meet."

This counsel prevailed; and gnashing his teeth with secret rage, Almamen found himself hurried along by the peasants through the thickest part of the copse. At length the procession stopped in a semicircular patch of rank sward, in which several head of cattle were quietly grazing, and a yet more numerous troop of peasants reclined upon the grass.

"Who have we here?" asked a voice which started back the blood from Almamen's cheek; and a Moor of commanding presence rose from the midst of his brethren. "By the beard of the prophet, it is the false santón! What dost thou from Grenada at this hour?"

"Noble Muza," returned Almamen, who, though indeed amazed that one whom he had imagined his victim was thus unaccountably become his judge, retained at least the semblance of composure, "my answer is to be given only to my lord the king; it is his commands that I obey."

"Thou art aware," said Muza, frowning, "that thy life is forfeited without appeal? Whosoever inmate of Grenada is found without the walls between sunset and sunrise dies the death of a traitor and deserter."

"The servants of the Alhambra are excepted," answered the Israelite, without changing his countenance.

"Ah!" muttered Muza, as a painful and sudden

thought seemed to cross him, "can it be possible that the rumor of the city hath truth, and that the monarch of Grenada is in treaty with the foe?" He mused a little; and then, motioning the Moors to withdraw, he continued aloud, "Almamen, answer me truly; hast thou sought the Christian camp with any message from the king?"

"I have not."

"Art thou without the walls on the mission of the king?"

"If I be so, I am a traitor to the king should I reveal his secret."

"I doubt thee much, santón," said Muza, after a pause. "I know thee for my enemy, and I do believe thy counsels have poisoned the king's ear against me, his people, and his duties. But no matter, thy life is spared awhile; thou remainest with us, and with us shalt thou return to the king."

"But, noble Muza—"

"I have said! guard the santón; mount him upon one of our chargers; he shall abide with us in our ambush."

While Almamen chafed in vain at his arrest, all in the Christian camp was yet still. At length, as the sun began to lift himself above the mountains, first a murmur, and then a din, betokened warlike preparations. Several parties of horse, under gallant and experienced leaders, formed themselves in different quarters, and departed in different ways, on expeditions of forage or in the hope of skirmish with the straggling detachments of the enemy. Of these, the best equipped was conducted by the Marquis de Villena and his gallant brother Don Alonzo de Pacheco. In this troop, too, rode many of the best blood of Spain; for in that chivalric army the officers vied with each other who should most eclipse the meaner soldiery in feats of personal valor, and the name of Villena drew around him the eager and ardent spirits that pined at the general inactivity of Ferdinand's politic campaign.

The sun, now high in heaven, glittered on the splendid arms and gorgeous pennons of Villena's company, as, leaving the camp behind, it entered a rich and wooded district that skirts the mountain barrier of the Vega; the brilliancy of the day, the beauty of the scene, the hope

and excitement of enterprise, animated the spirits of the whole party. In these expeditions strict discipline was often abandoned, from the certainty that it could be resumed at need. Conversation, gay and loud, interspersed with snatches of song, was heard among the soldiery; and in the nobler group that rode with Villena there was even less of the proverbial gravity of Spaniards.

"Now, Marquis," said Don Estevon de Suzon, "what wager shall be between us as to which lance this day robs Moorish beauty of the greatest number of its worshippers?"

"My falchion against your jennet," said Don Alonzo de Pacheco, taking up the challenge.

"Agreed. But, talking of beauty, were you in the queen's pavilion last night, noble marquis? It was enriched by a new maiden, whose strange and sudden apparition none can account for. Her eyes would have eclipsed the fatal glance of Cava; and had I been Rodrigo, I might have lost a crown for her smile."

"Ay," said Villena, "I heard of her beauty; some hostage from one of the traitor Moors, with whom the king (the saints bless him!) bargains for the city. They tell me the prince incurred the queen's grave rebuke for his attentions to the maiden."

"And this morning I saw that fearful Father Tomas steal into the prince's tent. I wish Don Juan well through the lecture. The monk's advice is like the algarroba,* when it is laid up to dry it may be reasonably wholesome, but it is harsh and bitter enough when taken fresh."

At this moment one of the sabaltern officers rode up to the marquis, and whispered in his ear.

"Ha!" said Villena, "the Virgin be praised! Sir knights, booty is at hand. Silence! Close up the ranks."

With that, mounting a little eminence, and shading his eyes with his hand, the marquis surveyed the plain below; and, at some distance, he beheld a horde of Moorish peasants driving some cattle into a thick copse. The word was hastily given, the troop dashed on, every voice was hushed, and the clatter of mail and the sound of hoofs alone broke the delicious silence of the noon-

*The algarroba is a sort of leguminous plant common in Spain.

day landscape. Ere they reached the copse the peasants had disappeared within it. The marquis marshaled his men in a semicircle round the trees, and sent on a detachment to the rear to cut off every egress from the wood. This done, the troop dashed with n. For the first few yards the space was more open than they had anticipated ; but the ground soon grew uneven, rugged, and almost precipitous ; and the soil and the interlaced trees alike forbade any rapid motion to the horse. Don Alonzo de Pacheco, mounted on a charger whose agile and docile limbs had been tutored to every description of warfare, and himself of little weight and incomparable horsemanship, dashed on before the rest. The trees hid him for a moment ; when, suddenly, a wild yell was heard, and, as it ceased, up rose the solitary voice of the Spaniard, shouting, "*Santiago, y cierra, España ; St. Jago, and charge, Spain !*"

Each cavalier spurred forward, when suddenly a shower of darts and arrows rattled on their armor ; and up sprung, from bush, and reeds, and rocky cliff, a number of Moors, and with wild shouts swarmed around the Spaniards.

"Back for your lives !" cried Villena ; "we are beset ; make for the level ground !"

He turned, spurred from the thicket, and saw the Paynim foe emerging through the glen, line after line of man and horse ; each Moor leading his slight and fiery steed by the bridle, and leaping on it as he issued from the wood into the plain. Cased in complete mail, his vizor down, his lance in rest, Villena (accompanied by such of his knights as could disentangle themselves from the Moorish foot) charged upon the foe. A moment of fierce shock passed: on the ground lay many a Moor, pierced through by the Christian lance; and on the other side of the foe was heard the voice of Villena—"St. Jago to the rescue !" But the brave marquis stood almost alone, save his faithful chamberlain, Solier. Several of his knights were dismounted, and swarms of Moors, with lifted knives, gathered around them as they lay, searching for the joints of the armor which might admit a mortal wound. Gradually, one by one, many of Villena's comrades joined their leader ; and now the green mantle of Don Alonzo de Pacheco was seen waving without the copse, and Villena congratulated himself on the safety

of his brother. Just at that moment a Moorish cavalier spurred from his troop, and met Pacheco in full career. The Moor was not clad, as was the common custom of the Paynim nobles, in the heavy Christian armor. He wore the light flexible mail of the ancient heroes of Araby or Fez. His turban, which was protected by chains of the finest steel interwoven with the folds, was of the most dazzling white; white, also, were his tunic and short mantle; on his left arm hung a short circular shield; in his right hand was poised a long and slender lance. As this Moor, mounted on a charger in whose raven hue not a white hair could be detected, dashed forward against Pacheco, both Christian and Moor breathed hard and remained passive. Either nation felt it as a sacrilege to thwart the encounter of champions so renowned.

"God save my brave brother!" muttered Villena, anxiously. "Amen," said those around him; for all who had ever beheld the wildest valor in that war trembled as they recognized the dazzling robe and coal-black charger of Muza Ben Abil Gazan. Nor was that renowned infidel mated with an unworthy foe. "Pride of the tournament and terror of the war" was the favorite title which the knights and ladies of Castile had bestowed on Don Alonzo de Pacheco.

When the Spaniard saw the redoubted Moor approach, he halted abruptly for a moment, and then, wheeling his horse round, took a wider circuit to give additional impetus to his charge. The Moor, aware of his purpose, halted also, and awaited the moment of his rush; when once more he darted forward, and the combatants met with a skill which called forth a cry of involuntary applause from the Christians themselves. Muza received on the small surface of his shield the ponderous spear of Alonzo, while his own light lance struck upon the helmet of the Christian, and, by the exactness of the aim rather than the weight of the blow, made Alonzo reel in his saddle.

The lances were thrown aside; the long broad falchion of the Christian, the curved Damascus scimeter of the Moor, gleamed in the air. They reined their chargers opposite each other in grave and deliberate silence.

"Yield thee, Sir Knight!" at length cried the fierce Moor, "for the motto of my scimeter declares that, if

thou meetest its stroke, thy days are numbered. The sword of the believer is the key of heaven and hell.”*

“False Paynim,” answered Alonzo, in a voice that rung hollow through his helmet, “a Christian knight is the equal of a Moorish army !”

Muza made no reply, but left the rein of his charger on his neck; the noble animal understood the signal, and, with a short, impatient cry, rushed forward at full speed. Alonzo met the charge with his falchion upraised, and his whole body covered with his shield; the Moor bent—the Spaniards raised a shout—Muza seemed stricken from his horse. But the blow of the heavy falchion had not touched him; and, seemingly without an effort, the curved blade of his own scimeter, gliding by that part of his antagonist’s throat where the helmet joins the cuirass, passed unresistingly and silently through the joints; and Alonzo fell at once and without a groan from his horse, his armor, to all appearance, unpenetrated, while the blood oozed slow and gurgling from a mortal wound.

“Allah il Allah !” shouted Muza, as he joined his friends; “Lelilies! Lelilies!” echoed the Moors; and, ere the Christians recovered their dismay, they were engaged hand to hand with their ferocious and swarming foes. It was, indeed, fearful odds; and it was a marvel to the Spaniards how the Moors had been enabled to harbor and conceal their numbers in so small a space. Horse and foot alike beset the company of Villena, already sadly reduced; and while the infantry, with desperate and savage fierceness, thrust themselves under the very bellies of the chargers, encountering both the hoofs of the steed and the deadly lance of the rider in the hope of finding a vulnerable place for the sharp Moorish knife, the horsemen, avoiding the stern grapple of the Spanish warriors, harassed them by the shaft and lance, now advancing, now retreating, and performing with incredible rapidity the evolutions of Oriental cavalry. But the life and soul of his party was the indomitable Muza. With a rashness which seemed to the superstitious Spaniards like the safety of a man protected by magic, he spurred his ominous black barb into the very

* Such, says Sale, is the poetical phrase of the Mohammedan divines.

midst of the serried phalanx whice Villena endeavored to form around him, breaking the order by his single charge, and from time to time bringing to the dust some champion of the troop by the noiseless and scarce-seen edge of his fatal scimeter.

Villena, in despair alike of fame and life, and gnawed with grief for his brother's loss, at length resolved to put the last hope of the battle on his single arm. He gave the signal for retreat; and, to protect his troop, remained himself motionless on his horse, like a statue of iron. Though not of large frame, he was esteemed the best swordsman, next only to Hernando del Pulgar and Gonsalvo de Cordova, in the army; practiced alike in the heavy assault of the Christian warfare and the rapid and dexterous exercise of the Moorish cavalry. There he remained, alone and grim, a lion at bay, while his troops slowly retreated down the Vega, and their trumpets sounded loud signals of distress and demands for succor to such of their companions as might be within hearing. Villena's armor defied the shafts of the Moors; and as one after another darted toward him with whirling scimeter and momentary assault, few escaped with impunity from an eye equally quick and a weapon more than equally formidable. Suddenly a cloud of dust swept toward him, and Muza, a moment before at the farther end of the field, came glittering through that cloud, with his white robe waving and his right arm bare. Villena recognized him, set his teeth hard, and putting spurs to his charger, met the rush. Muza swerved aside just as the heavy falchion swung over his head, and, by a back stroke of his own scimeter, cleft through the cuirass of Villena just above the hip-joint, and the blood followed the blade. The brave cavaliers now saw the danger of their chief; three of their number darted forward, and came in time to separate the combatants.

Muza staid not to encounter the new re-enforcement, but speeding across the plain, was soon seen rallying his own scattered cavalry, and pouring them down, in one general body, upon the scanty remnant of the Spaniards.

"Our day is come!" said the good knight Villena, with bitter resignation. "Nothing is left for us, my friends, but to give up our lives—an example how Spanish warriors should live and die. May God and the

Holy Mother forgive our sins, and shorten our purgatory!"

Just as he spoke a clarion was heard at a distance, and the sharpened senses of the knights caught the ring of advancing hoofs.

"We are saved!" cried Estevon de Suzon, rising on his stirrups. While he spoke the dashing stream of the Spanish horse broke over the little band; and Estevon beheld, bent upon himself, the dark eyes and quivering lip of Muza Ben Abil Gazan. That noble knight had never, perhaps, till then, known fear; but he felt his heart stand still as he now stood opposed to that irresistible foe.

"The dark fiend guides his blade!" thought De Suzon; "but I was shriven but yester-morn." The thought restored his wonted courage, and he spurred on to meet the scimeter of the Moor.

His assault took Muza by surprise. The Moor's horse stumbled over the ground, cumbered with the dead and slippery with blood, and his uplifted scimeter could not do more than break the force of the gigantic arm of De Suzon, as the knight's falchion, bearing down the scimeter and alighting on the turban of the Mohammedan, cleft midway through its folds, arrested only by the admirable temper of the links of steel which protected it. The shock hurled the Moor to the ground. He rolled under the saddle-girths of his antagonist.

"Victory and St. Jago!" cried the knight; "Muza is——"

The sentence was left eternally unfinished. The blade of the fallen Moor had already pierced De Suzon's horse through a mortal but undefended part. It fell, bearing his rider with him. A moment, and the two champions lay together grappling in the dust; in the next, the short knife which the Moor wore in his girdle had penetrated the Christian's vizor, passing through the brain.

To remount his steed, that remained at hand humbled and motionless, to appear again among the thickest of the fray, was a work no less rapidly accomplished than had been the slaughter of the unhappy Estevon de Suzon. But now the fortune of the day was stopped in a progress hitherto so triumphant to the Moors.

Pricking fast over the plain were seen the glittering horsemen of the Christian re-enforcements; and, at the

remoter distance, the royal banner of Spain, indistinctly descried through volumes of dust, denoted that Ferdinand himself was advancing to the support of his cavaliers.

The Moors, however, who had themselves received many and mysterious re-enforcements, which seemed to spring up like magic from the bosom of the earth, so suddenly and unexpectedly had they emerged from copse and cleft in that mountainous and entangled neighborhood, were not prepared for a fresh foe. At the command of the vigilant Muza they drew off, fell into order, and seizing, while yet there was time, the vantage ground which the inequalities of the soil and the shelter of the trees gave to their darts and agile horse, they presented an array which Ponce de Leon himself, who now arrived, deemed it more prudent not to assault. While Villena, in accents almost inarticulate with rage, was urging the Marquis of Cadiz to advance, Ferdinand, surrounded by the flower of his court, arrived at the rear of the troops; and, after a few words interchanged with Ponce de Leon, gave the signal of retreat.

When the Moors beheld that noble soldiery slowly breaking ground and retiring toward the camp, even Muza could not control their ardor. They rushed forward, harassing the retreat of the Christians, and delaying the battle by various skirmishes.

It was at this time that the headlong valor of Hernando del Pulgar, who had arrived with Ponce de Leon, distinguished itself in feats which yet live in the songs of Spain. Mounted upon an immense steed, and himself of colossal strength, he was seen charging alone upon the assailants, and scattering numbers to the ground with the sweep of his enormous and two-handed falchion. With a loud voice he called on Muza to oppose him; but the Moor, fatigued with slaughter, and scarcely recovered from the shock of his encounter with De Suzon, reserved so formidable a foe for a future contest.

It was at this juncture, while the field was covered with straggling skirmishers, that a small party of Spaniards, in cutting their way to the main body of their countrymen through one of the numerous copses held by the enemy, fell in at the outskirts with an equal number of Moors, and engaged them in a desperate conflict, hand to hand. Amidst the infidels was one man who

took no part in the affray ; at a little distance he gazed for a few moments upon the fierce and relentless slaughter of Moor and Christian with a smile of stern and complacent delight ; and then, taking advantage of the general confusion, rode gently, and, as he hoped, unobserved away from the scene. But he was not destined so quietly to escape. A Spaniard perceived him, and, from something strange and unusual in his garb, judged him one of the Moorish leaders ; and presently Almamen—for it was he—beheld before him the uplifted falchion of a foe neither disposed to give quarter nor to hear parley. Brave though the Israelite was, many reasons concurred to prevent his taking a personal part against the soldier of Spain ; and, seeing he should have no chance of explanation, he fairly put spurs to his horse and galloped across the plain. The Spaniard followed, gained upon him, and Almamen at length turned, in despair and the wrath of his haughty nature.

"Have thy will, fool !" said he, between his grinded teeth, as he griped his dagger and prepared for the conflict. It was long and obstinate ; for the Spaniard was skillful, and the Hebrew, wearing no mail, and without any weapon more formidable than a sharp and well-tempered dagger, was forced to act cautiously on the defensive. At length the combatants grappled, and by a dexterous thrust, the short blade of Almamen pierced the throat of his antagonist, who fell prostrate to the ground.

"I am safe," he thought, as he wheeled round his horse ; when, lo ! the Spaniards he had just left behind, and who had now routed their antagonists, were upon him.

"Yield or die !" cried the leader of the troop.

Almamen glared round ; no succor was at hand. "I am not your enemy," said he, sullenly, throwing down his weapon : "bear me to your camp."

A trooper siezed his rein, and, scouring along, the Spaniards soon reached the retreating army.

Meanwhile the evening darkened ; the shout and roar grew gradually less loud and loud ; the battle had ceased ; the stragglers had joined their several standards ; and, by the light of the first star, the Moorish force, bearing their wounded brethren and elated with success, re-entered

the gates of Grenada, as the black charger of the hero of the day closing the rear of the cavalry disappeared within the gloomy portals.

CHAPTER III.

THE HERO IN THE POWER OF THE DREAMER.

It was in the same chamber, and nearly at the same hour in which we first presented to the reader Boabdil el Chica, that we are again admitted to the presence of that ill-starred monarch. He was not alone. His favorite slave, Amine, reclined upon the ottomans, gazing with anxious love upon his thoughtful countenance, as he leaned against the glittering wall by the side of the casement, gazing abstractedly on the scene below.

From afar he heard the shouts of the populace at the return of Muza, and bursts of artillery confirmed the tidings of triumph which had already been borne to his ear.

"May the king live forever!" said Amine, timidly; "his armies have gone forth to conquer."

"But without their king," replied Boabdil, bitterly, "and headed by a traitor and a foe. I am meshed in the nets of an inexplicable fate!"

"Oh!" said the slave with sudden energy, as, clasping her hands, she rose from her couch, "oh, my lord! would that these humble lips dared utter other words than those of love!"

"And what wise counsel would they give me?" asked Boabdil, with a smile, "speak on."

"I will obey thee, then, even if it displease," cried Amine; and she rose, her cheeks glowing, her eyes sparkling, her beautiful form dilated. "I am a daughter of Grenada; I am the beloved of a king; I will be true to my birth and to my fortunes. Boabdil el Chico, the last of a line of heroes, shake off these gloomy fantasies—these doubts and dreams that smother the fire of a great nature and a kingly soul! Awake—arise—rob

Grenada of her Muza ; be thyself her Muza ! Trustest thou to magic and to spells ? grave them, then, on thy breastplate, write them on thy sword, and live no longer the Dreamer of the Alhambra ; become the savior of thy people !”

Boabdil turned and gazed on the inspired and beautiful form before him with mingled emotions of surprise and shame. “Out of the mouth of woman cometh my rebuke !” said he, sadly. “It is well !”

“Pardon me, pardon me !” said the slave, falling humbly at his knees ; “but blame me not that I would have thee worthy of thyself. Wert thou not happier, was not thy heart more light and thy hope more strong, when, at the head of thine armies, thine own scimeter slew thine own foes, and the terror of the Hero-King spread, in flame and slaughter, from the mountains to the seas ? Boabdil, dear as thou art to me ; equally as I would have loved thee hadst thou been born a lowly fisherman of the Darro, since thou art a king, I would have thee die a king, even if my own heart broke as I armed thee for thy latest battle !”

“Thou knowest not what thou sayst, Amine,” said Boabdil, “nor canst thou tell what spirits that are not of earth dictate to the actions and watch over the destinies of the rulers of nations. If I delay, if I linger, it is not from terror, but from wisdom. The cloud must gather on, dark and slow, ere the moment for the thunder-bolt arrives.”

“On thine house will the thunder-bolt fall, since over thine own house thou sufferest the cloud to gather,” said a calm and stern voice.

Boabdil started ; and in the chamber stood a third person, in the shape of a woman, past middle age, and of commanding port and stature. Upon her long-descending robes of embroidered purple were thickly woven jewels of royal price ; and her dark hair, slightly tinged with gray, parted over a majestic brow, while a small diadem surmounted the folds of the turban.

“My mother !” said Boabdil, with some haughty reserve in his tone ; “your presence is unexpected.”

“Ay,” answered Ayxa la Hora—for it was indeed that celebrated, and haughty, and high-souled queen—“and unwelcome ; so is ever that of your true friends. But not thus unwelcome was the presence of your

mother when her brain and her hand delivered you from the dungeon in which your stern father had cast your youth, and the dagger and the bowl seemed the only keys that would unlock the cell."

"And better hadst thou left the ill-omened son that thy womb conceived to die thus in youth, honored and lamented, than to live to manhood wrestling against an evil star and a relentless fate."

"Son," said the queen, gazing upon him with lofty and half-disdainful compassion, "men's conduct shapes out their own fortunes, and the unlucky are never the valiant and the wise."

"Madam," said Boabdil, coloring with passion, "I am still a king, nor will I be thus bearded—withdraw!"

Ere the queen could reply a eunuch entered and whispered Boabdil.

"Ha!" said he, joyfully, stamping his foot, "comes he then to brave the lion in his den? Let the rebel look to it. Is he alone?"

"Alone, great king."

"Bid my guards wait without; let the slightest signal summon them. Amine, retire! Madam——"

"Son!" interrupted Ayxa la Hora, in visible agitation, "do I guess aright? Is the brave Muza—the sole bulwark and hope of Grenada—whom unjustly thou wouldst last night have put in chains (chains! great prophet! is it thus a king should reward his heroes?)—is, I say, Muza here? and wilt thou make him the victim of his own generous trust?"

"Retire, woman!" said Boabdil, sullenly.

"I will not, save by force! I resisted a fiercer soul than thine when I saved thee from thy father."

"Remain then, if thou wilt, and learn how kings can punish traitors. Mesnour, admit the hero of Grenada."

Amine had vanished. Boabdil seated himself on the cushions—his face calm, but pale. The queen stood erect at a little distance, her arms folded on her breast, and her aspect knit and resolute. In a few moments Muza entered, alone. He approached the king with the profound salutation of Oriental obeisance; and then stood before him, with downcast eyes, in an attitude from which respect could not divorce a natural dignity and pride of mien.

"Prince," said Boabdil, after a moment's pause.

"yester-morn, when I sent for thee, thou didst brave my orders. Even in mine own Alhambra thy minions broke out in mutiny; they surrounded the fortress in which thou wert to wait my pleasure; they intercepted, they insulted, they drove back my guards; they stormed the towers protected by the banner of thy king. The governor, a coward or a traitor, rendered thee to the rebellious crowd. Was this all? No, by the prophet! Thou, by right my captive, didst leave thy prison but to head mine armies. And this day, the traitor subject—the secret foe—was the leader of the people who defy a king. This night thou comest to me unsought. Thou feelest secure from my just wrath, even in my palace. Thine insolence blinds and betrays thee. Man, thou art in my power! Ho, there!"

As the king spoke he rose; and presently the arcades at the back of the pavilion were darkened by long lines of the Ethiopian guard, each of height which, beside the slight Moorish race, appeared gigantic; stolid and passionless machines, to execute, without thought, the bloodiest or the lightest caprice of despotism. There they stood, their silver breastplates and long ear-rings contrasting their dusky skins, and bearing over their shoulders immense clubs studded with brazen nails. A little advanced from the rest stood the captain, with the fatal bowstring hanging carelessly on his arm, and his eyes intent to catch the slightest gesture of the king.

"Behold!" said Boabdil to his prisoner.

"I do; and am prepared for what I have foreseen."

The queen grew pale, but continued silent.

Muza resumed:

"Lord of the faithful!" said he, "if yester-morn I had acted otherwise, it would have been to the ruin of thy throne and our common race. The fierce zegrís suspected and learned my capture. They summoned the troops; they delivered me, it was true. At that time, had I reasoned with them, it would have been as drops upon a flame. They were bent on besieging thy palace, perhaps upon demanding thy abdication. I could not stifle their fury, but I could direct it. In the moment of passion I led them from rebellion against our common king to victory against our common foe. That duty done, I come unscathed from the sword of the Christian to bare my neck to the bow-string of my

friend. Alone, untracked, unsuspected, I have entered thy palace to prove to the sovereign of Grenada that the defendent of his throne is not a rebel to his will. Now summon the guards—I have done."

"Muza!" said Boabdil, in a softened voice, while he shaded his face with his hand, "we played together as children, and I have loved thee well; my kingdom even now, perchance, is passing from me, but I could almost be reconciled to that loss if I thought thy loyalty had not left me."

"Dost thou in truth suspect the faith of Muza Ben Abil Gazan?" said the Moorish prince, in a tone of surprise and sorrow. "Unhappy king! I deemed that my services, and not my defection, made my crime."

"Why do my people hate me? why do my armies menace?" said Boabdil, evasively; "why should a subject possess that allegiance which a king cannot obtain?"

"Because," replied Muza, boldly, "the king has delegated to a subject the command he should himself assume. "Oh, Boabdil!" he continued, passionately, "friend of my boyhood, ere the evil days came upon us; gladly would I sink to rest beneath the dark waves of yonder river, if thy arm and brain would fill up my place among the warriors of Grenada. And think not I say this only from our boyish love; think not I have placed my life in thy hands only from that servile loyalty to a single man which the false chivalry of Christendom imposes as a sacred creed upon its knights and nobles. But I speak and act but from one principle—to save the religion of my father and the land of my birth; for this I have risked my life against the foe; for this I surrender my life to the sovereign of my country. Grenada may yet survive, if monarch and people unite together. Grenada is lost forever, if her children, at this fatal hour, are divided against themselves. If, then, I, oh Boabdil! am the true obstacle to thy league with thine own subjects, give me at once to the bowstring, and my sole prayer shall be for the last remnant of the Moorish name and the last monarch of the Moorish dynasty."

"My son, my son! art thou convinced at last?" cried the queen, struggling with her tears; for she was one who wept easily at heroic sentiments, but never at the softer sorrows or from the more womanly emotions.

Boabdil lifted his head with a vain and momentary

attempt at pride ; his eye glanced from his mother to his friend, and his better feelings gushed upon him with irresistible force ; he threw himself into Muza's arms.

"Forgive me," he said, in broken accents, "forgive me ! How could I have wronged thee thus ? Yes," he continued, as he started from the noble breast on which for a moment he indulged no ungenerous weakness ; "yes, prince, your example shames, but it fires me. Grenada henceforth shall have two chieftains, and if I be jealous of thee, it shall be from an emulation thou canst not blame. Guards, retire. Mesnour ! ho, Mesnour ! Proclaim at day-break that I myself will review the troops in the Vivarambla. Yet"—and, as he spoke, his voice faltered and his brow became overcast—"yet, stay ! seek me thyself at day-break, and I will give thee my commands."

"Oh, my son ! why hesitate ?" cried the queen ; "why waver ? Prosecute thine own kingly designs, and——"

"Hush, madam," said Boabdil, regaining his customary cold composure ; "and, since you are now satisfied with your son, leave me alone with Muza."

The queen sighed heavily ; but there was something in the calm of Boabdil which chilled and awed her more than his bursts of passion. She drew her vail around her, and passed slowly and reluctantly from the chamber.

"Muza," said Boabdil, when alone with the prince, and fixing his large and thoughtful eyes upon the dark orbs of his companion, "when, in our younger days, we conversed together, do you remember how often that converse turned upon those solemn and mysterious themes to which the sages of our ancestral land directed their deepest lore ; the enigmas of the stars ; the science of fate ; the wild researches into the clouded future, which wombs the destinies of nations and of men ? Thou rememberest, Muza, that to such studies mine own vicissitudes and sorrows, even in childhood—the strange fortunes which gave me in my cradle the epithet of *El Zogoybi*—the ominous predictions of santons and astrologers as to the trials of my earthly fate, all contributed to incline my soul. Thou didst not despise these earnest musings, nor our ancestral lore, though, unlike me, ever more inclined to action than to contemplation, that which thou mightst believe had little influence upon what thou didst design. With me it hath been otherwise ; every

event of life hath conspired to feed my early prepossessions ; and in this awful crisis of my fate I have placed myself and my throne rather under the guardianship of spirits than of men. This alone has reconciled me to inaction ; to the torpor of the Alhambra ; to the mutinies of my people. I have smiled when foes surrounded and friends deserted me, secure of the aid at last—if I bided but the fortunate hour—of the charms of protecting spirits and the swords of the invisible creation. Thou wonderest what this should lead to. Listen ! Two nights since" (and the king shuddered) "I was with the dead ! My father appeared before me—not as I knew him in life—gaunt and terrible, full of the vigor of health, and the strength of kingly empire, and of fierce passion—but wan, calm, shadowy. From lips on which Azrael had set his livid seal he bade me beware of *thee* !"

The king ceased suddenly, and sought to read, on the face of Muza, the effect his words produced. But the proud and swarthy features of the Moor evinced no pang of conscience ; a slight smile of pity might have crossed his lip for a moment, but it vanished ere the king could detect it. Boabdil continued.

"Under the influence of this warning I issued the order for thy arrest. Let this pass—I resume my tale. I attempted to throw myself at the specter's feet ; it glided from me, motionless and impalpable. I asked the Dead One if he forgave his unhappy son the sin of rebellion—alas ! too well requited even upon earth. And the voice again came forth, and bade me keep the crown that I had gained as the sole atonement for the past. Then again I asked whether the hour for act'ou had arrived ; and the specter, while it faded gradually into air, answered, 'No !' 'Oh !' I exclaimed, 'ere thou leavest me, be one sign accorded me that I have not dreamed this vision ; and give me, I pray thee, note and warning when the evil star of Boabdil shall withhold its influence, and he may strike, without resistance from the powers above, for his glory and his throne.' 'The sign and the warning are bequeathed thee,' answered the ghostly image. It vanished ; thick darkness fell around ; and when once more the light of the lamps we bore became visible, behold, there stood before me a skeleton, in the regal robe of the kings of Grenada, and on its grisly head was the imperial diadem. With one

hand raised it pointed to the opposite wall, wherein burned, like an orb of gloomy fire, a broad dial-plate, on which were graven these words, 'BEWARE—FEAR NOT—ARM !' The finger of the dial moved rapidly round, and rested at the word *beware*. From that hour to the one in which I last beheld it, it hath not moved. Muza, the tale is done ; wilt thou visit with me this enchanted chamber, and see if the hour be come ?"

"Commander of the faithful," said Muza, "the story is dread and awful. But pardon thy friend—wert thou alone, or was the santon Almamen thy companion ?"

"Why the question ?" said Boabdil, evasively, and slightly coloring.

"I fear his truth," answered Muza ; "the Christian king conquers more foes by craft than force, and his spies are more deadly than his warriors. Wherefore this caution against me but (pardon me) for thine own undoing ? Were I a traitor, could Ferdinand himself have endangered thy crown so imminently as the revenge of the leader of thine own armies ? Why, too, this desire to keep thee inactive ? For the brave, every hour hath its chances ; but for us, every hour increases our peril. If we seize not the present time, our supplies are cut off, and famine is a foe all our valor cannot resist. The dervish—who is he ? a stranger, not of our race and blood. But this morning I found him without the walls, nor far from the Spaniard's camp."

"Ha !" cried the king, quickly ; "and what said he ?"

"Little but in hints ; sheltering himself, by those hints, under thy name."

"He ! what dared he own ? Muza, what were these hints ?"

The Moor here recounted the interview with Almamen, his detention, his inactivity in the battle, and his subsequent capture by the Spaniards. The king listened attentively, and regained his composure.

"It is a strange and awful man," said he, after a pause. "Guards and chains will not detain him. Ere long he will return. But thou, at least, Muza, art henceforth free, alike from the suspicion of the living and the warnings of the dead. No, my friend," continued Boabdil, with generous warmth, "it is better to lose a crown, to lose life itself, than confidence in a heart like thine.

Come, let us inspect this magic tablet ; perchance—and how my heart bounds as I utter the hope !—the hour may have arrived.”

CHAPTER IV.

A FULLER VIEW OF THE CHARACTER OF BOABDIL—MUZA IN THE GARDENS OF HIS BELOVED.

MUZA BEN ABIL GAZAN returned from his visit to Boabdil with a thoughtful and depressed spirit. His arguments had failed to induce the king to disdain the command of the magic dial, which still forbade him to arm against the invaders ; and although the royal favor was no longer withdrawn from himself, the Moor felt that such favor hung upon a capricious and uncertain tenure so long as his sovereign was the slave of superstition or imposture. But that noble warrior, whose character the adversity of his country had singularly exalted and refined, even while increasing its natural fierceness, thought little of himself in comparison with the evils and misfortunes which the king's continued irresolution must bring upon Grenada.

“So brave, and yet so weak,” thought he, “so weak, and yet so obstinate ; so wise a reasoner, yet so credulous a dupe ! Unhappy Boabdil ! the stars, indeed, seem to fight against thee, and their influences at thy birth marred all thy gifts and virtues with counteracting infirmity and error.”

Muza—more, perhaps, than any subject in Grenada—did justice to the real character of the king ; but even he was unable to penetrate all its complicated and latent mysteries. Boabdil el Chico was no ordinary man ; his affections were warm and generous, his nature calm and gentle ; and although early power, and the painful experience of a mutinous people and ungrateful court, had imparted to that nature an irascibility of temper and a quickness of suspicion foreign to its earlier soil, he was easily led back to generosity and justice ; and, if warm in resentment, was magnanimous in forgiveness. Deeply accomplished in all the learning of his race and time,

he was, in books at least, a philosopher ; and, indeed, his attachment to the abstruser studies was one of the main causes which unfitted him for his present station.

But it was the circumstances attendant on his birth and childhood that had perverted his keen and graceful intellect to morbid indulgence in mystic reveries, and all the doubt, fear, and irresolution of a man who pushes metaphysics into the supernatural world. Dark prophecies accumulated omens over his head ; men united in considering him born to disastrous destinies. Whenever he had sought to wrestle against hostile circumstances, some seemingly accidental cause, sudden and unforeseen, had blasted the labors of his most vigorous energy—the fruit of his most deliberate wisdom. Thus, by degrees, a gloomy and despairing cloud settled over his mind ; but, secretly skeptical of the Mohammedan creed, and too proud and sanguine to resign himself wholly and passively to the doctrine of inevitable predestination, he sought to contend against the machinations of hostile demons and boding stars, not by human but spiritual agencies. Collecting around him the seers and magicians of Orient fanaticism, he lived in the visions of another world ; and flattered by the promises of impostors or dreamers, and deceived by his own subtle and brooding tendencies of mind, it was among spells and cabals that he sought to draw forth the mighty secret which was to free him from the meshes of the preternatural enemies of his fortune, and leave him the freedom of other men to wrestle, with equal chances, against peril and adversities. It was thus that Almamen had won the mastery of his mind ; and though, upon matters of common and earthly import or solid learning, Boabdil could contend with sages, upon those of superstition he could be fooled by a child. He was, in this, a kind of Hamlet : formed, under prosperous and serene fortunes, to render blessings and reap renown ; but over whom the chilling shadow of another world had fallen ; whose soul curdled back into itself ; whose life had been separated from that of the herd ; whom doubts and awe drew back, while circumstances impelled onward ; whom a supernatural doom invested with a peculiar philosophy, not of human effect and cause ; and who, with every gift that could ennoble and adorn, was suddenly palsied into that moral imbe-

cility which is almost ever the result of mortal visitings into the haunted regions of the Ghostly and Unknown. The gloomier colorings of his mind had been deepened, too, by secret remorse. For the preservation of his own life, constantly threatened by his unnatural predecessor, he had been early driven into rebellion against his father. In age, infirmity, and blindness that fierce king had been made a prisoner at Salobrena by his brother, El Zagal, Boabdil's partner in rebellion ; and dying suddenly, El Zagal was suspected of his murder. Though Boabdil was innocent of such a crime, he felt himself guilty of the causes which led to it ; and a dark memory resting upon his conscience served to augment his superstition and enervate the vigor of his resolves : for, of all things that make men dreamers, none is so effectual as remorse operating upon a thoughtful temperament.

Revolving the character of his sovereign, and sadly foreboding the ruin of his country, the young hero of Grenada pursued his way, until his steps almost unconsciously led him toward the abode of Leila. He scaled the walls of the garden as before ; he neared the house. All was silent and deserted ; his signal was unanswered ; his murmured song brought no grateful light to the lattice, no fairy footstep to the balcony. Dejected and sad of heart, he retired from the spot ; and, returning home, sought a couch to which even all the fatigue and excitement he had undergone could not win the forgetfulness of slumber. The mystery that wrapped the maiden of his homage, the rareness of their interviews, and the wild and poetical romance that made a very principle of the chivalry of the Spanish Moors, had imparted to Muza's love for Leila a passionate depth, which, at this day and in more enervated climes, is unknown to the Mohammedan lover. His keenest inquiries had been unable to pierce the secret of her birth and station. Little of the inmates of that guarded and lonely house was known in the neighborhood ; the only one ever seen without its walls was an old man of the Jewish faith, supposed to be a superintendent of the foreign slaves (for no Mohammedan slave would have been subjected to the insult of submission to a Jew), and, though there were rumors of the vast wealth and gorgeous luxury within the mansion, it was supposed the abode of some Moorish emir absent from the city ; and the interest of the gos-

sips was at this time absorbed in more weighty matters than the affairs of a neighbor. But when, the next eve and the next, Muza returned to the spot equally in vain, his impatience and alarm could no longer be restrained; he resolved to lie in watch by the portals of the house night and day, until at least he could discover some one of the inmates whom he could question of his love, and, perhaps, bribe to his service. As with this resolution he was hovering round the mansion, he beheld, stealing from a small door in one of the low wings of the house, a bended and decrepit form; it supported its steps upon a staff; and, as now entering the garden, it stooped by the side of a fountain to cull flowers and herbs by the light of the moon, the Moor almost started to behold a countenance which resembled that of some ghoul or vampire haunting the places of the dead. He smiled at his own fear; and with a quick and stealthy pace hastened through the trees, and, gaining the spot where the old man bent, placed his hand on his shoulder ere his presence was perceived.

Ximen, for it was he, looked round eagerly, and a faint cry of terror broke from his lips.

"Hush!" said the Moor; "fear me not, I am a friend. Thou art old, man—gold is ever welcome to the aged." As he spoke he dropped several broad pieces into the breast of the Jew, whose ghastly features gave forth a yet more ghastly smile as he received the gift and mumbled forth,

"Charitable young man! generous, benevolent, excellent young man!"

"Now, then," said Muza, "tell me—you belong to this house—Leila, the maiden within, tell me of her—is she well?"

"I trust so," returned the Jew; "I trust so, noble master."

"Trust so! *know* you not of her state?"

"Not I; for many nights I have not seen her, excellent sir," answered Ximen; "she hath left Grenada, she hath gone. You waste your time and mar your precious health amidst these nightly dews: they are unwholesome, very unwholesome at the time of the new moon."

"Gone!" echoed the Moor: "left Grenada! woe is

me ! and whither ? there, there, more gold for you ; old man, tell me whither ?”

“ Alas ! I know not, most magnanimous young man ; I am but a servant, I know nothing.”

“ When will she return ?”

“ I cannot tell thee.”

“ Who is thy master ? who owns yon mansion ?”

Ximen's countenance fell ; he looked round in doubt and fear, and then, after a short pause, answer'd, “ A wealthy man, good sir ; a Moor of Africa : but he hath also gone ; he but seldom visits us ; Grenada is not so peaceful a residence as it was ; I would go too if I could.”

Muza released his hold of Ximen, who gazed at the Moor's working countenance with a malignant smile, for Ximen hated all men.

“ Thou hast done with me, young warrior ? Pleasant dreams to thee under the new moon ; thou hadst best retire to thy bed. Farewell ! bless thy charity to the poor old man !”

Muza heard him not ; he remained motionless for some moments ; and then, with a heavy sigh, as that of one who has gained the mastery of himself after a bitter struggle, he said, half aloud, “ Allah be with thee, Leila ! Grenada now is my only mistress.”

CHAPTER V.

BOABDIL'S RECONCILIATION WITH HIS PEOPLE.

SEVERAL days had elapsed without any encounter between Moor and Christian ; for Ferdinand's cold and sober policy, warned by the loss he had sustained in the ambush of Muza, was now bent on preserving rigorous restraint upon the fiery spirits he commanded. He forbade all parties of skirmish, in which the Moors, indeed, had usually gained the advantage, and contented himself with occupying all the passes through which provisions could arrive at the besieged city. He commenced strong fortifications around his camp ; and,

forbidding assault on the Moors, defied it against himself.

Meanwhile Almamen had not returned to Grenada. No tidings of his fate reached the king, and his prolonged disappearance began to produce visible and salutary effect upon the long-dormant energies of Boabdil. The counsels of Muza, the exhortations of the queen mother, the enthusiasm of his mistress, Amine, uncounteracted by the arts of the magician, aroused the torpid lion of his nature. But still his army and his subjects murmured against him, and his appearance in the Vivarambla might possibly be the signal of revolt. It was at this time that a most fortunate circumstance at once restored to him the confidence and affections of his people. His stern uncle, El Zagal, once a rival for his crown, and whose daring valor, mature age, and military sagacity had won him a powerful party within the city, had been some months since conquered by Ferdinand ; and, in yielding the possessions he held, had been rewarded with a barren and dependent principality. His defeat, far from benefiting Boabdil, had exasperated the Moors against their king. "For," said they, almost with one voice, "the brave El Zagal never would have succumbed had Boabdil properly supported his arms." And it was the popular discontent and rage at El Zagal's defeat which had, indeed, served Boabdil with a reasonable excuse for shutting himself in the strong fortress of the Alhambra. It now happened that El Zagal, whose dominant passion was hatred of his nephew, and whose fierce nature chafed at its present cage, resolved, in his old age, to blast all his former fame by a signal treason to his country. Forgetting everything but revenge against his nephew, whom he was resolved should share his own ruin, he armed his subjects, crossed the country, and appeared at the head of a gallant troop in the Spanish camp, an ally of Ferdinand against Grenada. When this was heard by the Moors, it is impossible to conceive their indignant wrath ; the crime of El Zagal produced an instantaneous reaction in favor of Boabdil ; the crowd surrounded the Alhambra, and with prayers and tears entreated the forgiveness of the king. This event completed the conquest of Boabdil over his own irresolution. He ordained an assembly of the whole army in the broad space of the Vivarambla ; and when, at break

of day, he appeared in full armor in the square, with Muza at his right hand, himself in the flower of youthful beauty, and proud to feel once more a hero and a king, the joy of the people knew no limit; the air was rent with cries of "Long live Boabdil el Chico!" and the young monarch, turning to Muza, with all his soul upon his brow, exclaimed, "The hour has come; I am no longer El Zogoybi!"

CHAPTER VI.

LEILA—HER NEW LOVER—PORTRAIT OF THE FIRST IN-
QUISITOR OF SPAIN—THE CHALICE RETURNED
TO THE LIPS OF ALMAMEN.

WHILE thus the state of events within Grenada, the course of our story transports us back to the Christian camp. It was in one of a long line of tents that skirted the pavilion of Isabel, and was appropriated to the ladies attendant on the royal presence, that a young female sat alone. The dusk of evening already gathered around, and only the outline of her form and features was visible. But even that, imperfectly seen—the dejected attitude of the form, the drooping head, the hands clasped upon the knees—might have sufficed to denote the melancholy nature of the reverie which the maid indulged.

"Ah," thought she, "to what danger am I exposed! If my father, if my lover dreamed of the persecution to which their poor Leila is abandoned!"

A few tears, large and bitter, broke from her eyes and stole unheeded down her cheek. At that moment the deep and musical chime of a bell was heard summoning the chiefs of the army to prayer; for Ferdinand invested all his worldly schemes with a religious covering, and to his politic war he sought to give the imposing character of a sacred crusade.

"That sound," thought she, sinking on her knees, "summons the Nazarenes to the presence of their God. It reminds me, a captive by the waters of Babylon, that

God is ever with the friendless. Oh ! succor and defend me, Thou who didst look of old upon Ruth standing amidst the corn, and didst watch over thy chosen people in the hungry wilderness and in the stranger's land."

Wrapped in her mute and passionate devotions, Leila remained long in her touching posture. The bell had ceased ; all without was hushed and still ; when the drapery stretched across the opening of the tent was lifted, and a young Spaniard, cloaked from head to foot in a long mantle, stood within the space. He gazed in silence upon the kneeling maiden : nor was it until she rose that he made his presence audible.

"Ah, fairest," said he then, as he attempted to take her hand, "thou wilt not answer my letters ; see me then, at thy feet. It is thou who teachest me to kneel."

"You, prince !" said Leila, agitated, and in great and evident fear. "Why harass and insult me thus ? Am I not that sacred thing, a hostage and a charge ? And is name, honor, peace, all that woman is taught to hold most dear, to be thus robbed from me under the name of a love dishonoring to thee and an insult to myself ?"

"Sweet one," answered Don Juan, with a slight laugh, "thou hast learned within yonder walls a creed of morals little known to Moorish maidens, if fame belies them not. Suffer me to teach thee easier morality and sounder logic. It is no dishonor to a Christian prince to adore beauty like thine ; it is no insult to a maiden hostage if the Infant of Spain proffer her the homage of his heart. But we waste time. Spies, and envious tongues, and vigilant eyes are round us ; and it is not often that I can baffle them as I have done now. Fairest, hear me !" and this time he succeeded in seizing the hand which vainly struggled against his clasp. "Nay, why so coy ? what can female heart desire that my love cannot shower upon thine ? Speak but the word, enchanting maiden, and I will bear thee from these scenes, unseemly to thy gentle eyes. Amidst the pavilions of princes shalt thou repose, and amidst gardens of the orange and the rose shalt thou listen to the vows of thine adorer. Surely, in these arms thou wilt not pine for a barbarous home and a fated city. And if thy pride, sweet maiden, deafen thee to the voice of nature, learn that the haughtiest dames of Spain would bend in envious court to the beloved of their future

king. This night—listen to me—I say, listen—this night I will bear thee hence! Be but mine, and no matter whether heretic or infidel or whatever the priests style thee, neither church nor king shall tear thee from the bosom of thy lover.”

“It is well spoken, son of the most Christian monarch!” said a deep voice; and the Dominican, Tomas de Torquemada, stood before the prince.

Juan, as if struck by a thunder-bolt, released his hold, and, staggering back a few paces, seemed to cower, abashed and humbled, before the eye of the priest as it glared upon him through the gathering darkness.

“Prince,” said the friar, after a pause, “not to thee will our holy church attribute this crime; thy pious heart hath been betrayed by sorcery. Retire.”

“Father,” said the prince, in a tone into which, despite his awe of that terrible man, THE FIRST GRAND INQUISITOR OF SPAIN, his libertine spirit involuntarily forced itself in a half latent raillery—“sorcery of eyes like those bewitched the wise son of a more pious sire than even Ferdinand of Arragon.”

“He blasphemeth!” returned the monk. “Prince, beware! you know not what you do.”

The prince lingered; and then, as if aware that he must yield, gathered his cloak round him and left the tent without reply.

Pale and trembling with fears no less felt, perhaps, though more vague and perplexed than those from which she had just been delivered, Leila stood before the monk.

“Be seated, daughter of the faithless,” said Torquemada, “we would converse with thee; and, as thou valuest—I say not thy soul, for, alas! of that precious treasure thou art not conscious; but mark me, woman! as thou prizest the safety of those delicate limbs and that wanton beauty, answer truly what I shall ask thee. The man who brought thee hither—is he, in truth, thy father?”

“Alas!” answered Leila, almost fainting with terror at this rude and menacing address, “he is, in truth, mine only parent.”

“And his faith—his religion?”

“I have never beheld him pray.”

"Hem! he never prays—a noticeable fact. But of what sect, what creed does he profess himself?"

"I cannot answer thee."

"Nay, there be means that may wring from thee an answer. Maiden, be not so stubborn; speak! thinkst thou he serves the temple of the Mohammedan?"

"No! oh no!" answered Leila, eagerly, deeming that her reply in this, at least, would be acceptable. "He disowns, he scorns, he abhors the Moorish faith; even," she added, "with too fierce a zeal."

"Thou dost not share that zeal, then? Well, worships he in secret, after the Christian rites?"

Leila hung her head and answered not.

"I understand thy silence. And in what belief, maiden, wert thou reared beneath his roof?"

"I know not what it is called among men," answered Leila, with firmness, "but it is the faith of the ONE GOD, who protects his chosen, and shall avenge their wrongs; the God who made earth and heaven; and who, in an idolatrous and benighted world, transmitted the knowledge of himself and his holy laws from age to age through the channel of one solitary people, in the plains of Palestine and by the waters of the Hebron."

"And in that faith thou wert trained, maiden, by thy father?" said the Dominican, calmly. "I am satisfied. Rest here in peace; we may meet again soon."

The last words were spoken with a soft and tranquil smile; a smile in which glazing eyes and agonizing hearts had often beheld the ghastly omen of the torture and the stake.

On leaving the unfortunate Leila the monk took his way toward the neighboring tent of Ferdinand. But, ere he reached it, a new thought seemed to strike the holy man; he altered the direction of his steps, and gained one of those little shrines common in Catholic countries, and which had been hastily built of wood, in the center of a small copse, and by the side of a brawling rivulet, toward the back of the king's pavilion. But one solitary sentry at the entrance of the copse guarded the consecrated place; and its exceeding loneliness and quiet were a grateful contrast to the animated world of the surrounding camp. The monk entered the shrine, and fell down on his knees before an image of the Virgin, rudely sculptured, but richly decorated.

"Ah, Holy Mother!" groaned this singular man, "support me in the trial to which I am appointed. Thou knowst that the glory of thy blessed Son is the sole object for which I live and move, and have my being; but at times, alas! the spirit is infected with the weakness of the flesh. *Ora pro nobis*, oh, Mother of Mercy! Verily, oftentimes my heart sinks within me when it is mine to vindicate the honor of thy holy cause against the young and the tender, the aged and the decrepit. But, what are beauty and youth, gray hairs and trembling knees, in the eye of the Creator? Miserable worms are we all; nor is there anything acceptable in thy sight but the hearts of the faithful. Youth without faith, age without belief, purity without grace, virtue without holiness, are only more hideous by their seeming beauty; whited sepulchres, glittering rottenness. I know this, I know it; but the human man is strong within me. Strengthen me, that I pluck it out; so that, by diligent and constant struggle with the feeble Adam, thy servant may be reduced into a mere machine, to punish the godless and advance the church."

Here sobs and tears choked the speech of the Dominican; he groveled in the dust, he tore his hair, he howled aloud; the agony was fierce upon him. At length he drew from his robe a whip composed of several thongs, studded with small and sharp nails; and, stripping his gown and the shirt of hair worn underneath over his shoulders, applied the scourge to the naked flesh with a fury which soon covered the green sward with the thick and clotted blood. The exhaustion which followed this terrible penance seemed to restore the senses of the stern fanatic. A smile broke over the features that bodily pain only released from the anguished expression of mental and visionary struggles; and when he rose and drew the hair-cloth shirt over the lacerated and quivering flesh, he said, "Now hast thou deigned to comfort and visit me, oh, pitying Mother; and even as by these austerities against this miserable body is the spirit relieved and soothed, so dost thou typify and betoken that men's bodies are not to be spared by those who seek to save souls, and bring the nations of the earth into thy fold."

With that thought the countenance of Torquemada re-assumed its wonted rigid and passionless composure;

and replacing the scourge, yet clotted with blood, into his bosom, he pursued his way to the royal tent.

He found Ferdinand poring over the accounts of the vast expenses of his military preparations, which he had just received from his treasurer; and the brow of the thrifty though ostentatious monarch was greatly overcast by the examination.

"By the Bulls of Guisando!" said the king, gravely, "I purchase the salvation of my army, in this holy war, at a marvelous heavy price; and, if the infidels hold out much longer, we shall have to pawn our very patrimony of Arragon."

"Son," answered the Dominican, "to purposes like thine, fear not that Providence itself will supply the worldly means. But why doubtest thou? are not the means within thy reach? It is just that thou alone shouldst not support the wars by which Christendom is glorified. Are there not others?"

"I know what thou wouldst say, father," interrupted the king, quickly; "thou wouldst observe that my brother monarchs should assist me with arms and treasure. Most just. But they are avaricious and envious, Tomas; and Mammon hath corrupted them."

"Nay, not to kings pointed my thought."

"Well, then," resumed the king impatiently, "thou wouldst imply that mine own knights and nobles should yield up their coffers and mortgage their possessions. And so they ought; but they murmur already at what they have yielded to our necessities."

"And, in truth," rejoined the friar, "these noble warriors should not be shorn of splendor that well becomes the valiant champions of the church. Nay, listen to me, son, and I may suggest a means whereby not the friends, but the enemies of the Catholic faith shall contribute to the downfall of the Paynim. In thy dominions, especially those newly won, throughout Andalusia, in the kingdom of Cordova, are men of enormous wealth; the very caverns of the earth are sown with the impious treasure they have plundered from Christian hands, and consume in the furtherance of their iniquity. Sire, I speak of the race that crucified the Lord."

"The Jews—ay, but the excuse——"

"Is before thee. This traitor with whom thou holdest intercourse, who vowed to thee to render up Grenada,

and who was found the very next morning fighting with the Moors, with the blood of a Spanish martyr red upon his hands, did he not confess that his fathers were of that hateful race? did he not bargain with thee to elevate his brethren to the rank of Christians? and has he not left with thee, upon false pretenses, a harlot of his faith who, by sorcery and the help of the Evil One, hath seduced into frantic passion the heart of the heir of the most Christian king?"

"Ha! thus does that libertine boy ever scandalize us!" said the king, bitterly.

"Well," pursued the Dominican, not heeding the interruption, "have you not here excuse enough to wring from the whole race the purchase of their existence? Note the glaring proof of this conspiracy of hell. The outcasts of the earth employed this crafty agent to contract with thee for power; and, to consummate their guilty designs, the arts that seduced Solomon are employed against thy son. The beauty of the strange woman captivates his senses: so that, through the future sovereign of Spain, the counsels of Jewish craft may establish the domination of Jewish ambition. How knowst thou," he added, as he observed that Ferdinand listened to him with earnest attention, "how knowst thou but what the next step might have been thy secret assassination, so that the victim of witchcraft, the minion of the Jewess, might reign in the stead of the mighty and unconquerable Ferdinand?"

"Go on, father," said the king, thoughtfully; "I see, at least, enough to justify an impost upon these servitors of Mammon."

"But, though common sense suggests to us," continued Torquemada, "that this disguised Israelite could not have acted on so vast a design without the instigation of his brethren, not only in Grenada, but throughout Andalusia, would it not be right to obtain from him his confession and that of the maiden within the camp, so that we may have broad and undeniable evidence whereon to act, and to still all cavil that may come not only from the godless, but even from the too tender scruples of the righteous? Even the queen—whom the saints ever guard!—hath ever too soft a heart for these infidels; and——"

"Right!" cried the king, again breaking upon Tor-

quemada ; " Isabel, the queen of Castile, must be satisfied of the justice of all our actions."

" And should it be proved that thy throne or life were endangered, and that magic was exercised to entrap her royal son into a passion for a Jewish maiden, which the church holds a crime worthy of excommunication itself, surely, instead of counteracting, she would assist our schemes."

" Holy friend," said Ferdinand, with energy, " ever a comforter, both for this world and the next, to thee and to the new powers intrusted to thee we commit this charge ; see to it at once ; time presses ; Grenada is obstinate ; the treasury waxes low."

" Son, thou hast said enough," replied the Dominican, closing his eyes and muttering a short thanksgiving. " Now, then, to my task."

" Yet stay," said the king, with an altered visage ; " follow me to my oratory within ; my heart is heavy, and I would fain seek the solace of the confessional."

The monk obeyed ; and while Ferdinand, whose wonderful abilities were mingled with the weakest superstition—who persecuted from policy, yet believed, in his own heart, that he punished but from piety—confessed, with penitent tears, the grave offenses of ages forgotten and beads untold ; and while the Dominican admonished, rebuked, or soothed, neither prince nor monk ever dreamed that there was an error to confess in, or a penance to be adjudged to, the cruelty that tortured a fellow being, or the avarice that sought pretenses for the extortion of a whole people. And yet we are told by some philosophers that his conscience is a sufficient guide to man !



CHAPTER VII.

THE TRIBUNAL AND THE MIRACLE.

It was the dead of night ; the army was hushed in sleep, when four soldiers belonging to the holy brotherhood, bearing with e whose manacles

proclaimed him a prisoner, passed in steady silence to a huge tent in the neighborhood of the royal pavilion. A deep dike, formidable barricadoes, and sentries stationed at frequent intervals, testified the estimation in which the safety of this segment of the camp was held. The tent to which the soldiers approached was, in extent, larger than even the king's pavilion itself ; a mansion of canvas, surrounded by a wide wall of massive stones ; and from its summit gloomed, in the clear and shining starlight, a small black pennant, on which was wrought a white broad-pointed cross. The soldiers halted at the gate in the wall, resigned their charge, with a whispered watchword, to two gaunt sentries ; and then (relieving the sentries, who proceeded on with the prisoner) remained mute and motionless at the post ; for stern silence and Spartan discipline were the attributes of the brotherhood of St. Hermadad.

The prisoner, as he now neared the tent, halted a moment, looked round steadily, as if to fix the spot in his remembrance, and then, with an impatient though stately gesture, followed his guards. He passed two divisions of the tent, dimly lighted, and apparently deserted. A man, clad in long black robes, with a white cross on his breast, now appeared ; there was an interchange of signals in dumb show, and in another moment Almamen the Hebrew stood within a large chamber (if so that division of the tent might be called) hung with black serge. At the upper part of the space was an *estrado* or platform, on which, by a long table, sat three men, while at the head of the board was seen the calm and rigid countenance of Tomas de Torquemada. The threshold of the tent was guarded by two men in garments similar in hue and fashion to those of the figure who had ushered Almamen into the presence of the inquisitor, each bearing a long lance, and with a long two-edged sword by his side. This made all the inhabitants of that melancholy and ominous apartment.

The Israelite looked round with a pale brow, but a flashing and scornful eye ; and, when he met the gaze of the Dominican, it almost seemed as if those two men, each so raised above his fellows by the sternness of his nature, and the energy of his passions, sought by a look alone to assert his own supremacy and crush his foe. Yet, in truth, neither did justice to the other ; and the

indignant disdain of Almamen was retorted by the cold and icy contempt of the Dominican.

"Prisoner," said Torquemada, the first to withdraw his gaze, "a less haughty and stubborn demeanor might have better suited thy condition ; but no matter ; our meek and humble. We have sent for thee in a charitable and paternal hope ; for although, as spy and traitor, thy life is already forfeited, yet would we fain redeem and spare it to repentance. That hope mayst thou not forego, for the nature of all of us is weak, and clings to life, that straw of the drowning seaman."

"Priest, if such thou art," replied the Hebrew, "I have already, when first brought to this camp, explained the causes of my detention among the troops of the Moor. It was my zeal for the King of Spain that brought me into that peril. Escaping from that peril, incurred in his behalf, is the King of Spain to be my accuser and my judge ? If, however, my life now is sought as the grateful return for the proffer of inestimable service, I stand here to yield it. Do thy worst ; and tell thy master that he loses more by my death than he can win by the lives of thirty thousand warriors."

"Cease this idle babble," said the monk-inquisitor, contemptuously, "nor think thou couldst ever deceive, with thy empty words, the mighty intellect of Ferdinand of Spain. Thou hast now to defend thyself against still graver charges than those of treachery to the king whom thou didst profess to serve. Yea, misbeliever as thou art, it is thine to vindicate thyself from blasphemy against the God thou shouldst adore. Confess the truth ; thou art of the tribe and faith of Israel ?"

The Hebrew frowned darkly. "Man," said he, solemnly, "is a judge of the deeds of men, but not of their opinions. I will not answer thee."

"Pause ! We have means at hand that the strongest nerves and the stoutest heart have failed to encounter. Pause—confess !"

"Thy threat awes me not," said the Hebrew ; "but I am human ; and, since thou wouldst know the truth, thou mayst learn it without the torture. I am of the same race as the apostles of thy church—I am a Jew."

"He confesses—write down the words. Prisoner, thou hast done wisely ; and we pray the Lord that, acting thus, thou mayst escape both the torture and the

death. And in that faith thy daughter was reared? Answer."

"My daughter! there is no charge against her! By the God of Sinai and Horeb, you dare not touch a hair of that innocent head!"

"Answer," repeated the inquisitor, coldly.

"I do answer. She was brought up no renegade to her father's faith."

"Write down the confession. Prisoner," resumed the Dominican, after a pause, "but few more questions remain; answer them truly, and thy life is saved. In thy conspiracy to raise thy brotherhood of Andalusia to power and influence; or, as thou didst craftily term it, to equal laws with the followers of our blessed Lord; in thy conspiracy (by what dark acts I seek not now to know—*protege nos, beate Domine!*) to entangle in wanton affections to thy daughter the heart of the Infant of Spain—silence, I say—be still! in this conspiracy thou wert aided, abetted, or instigated by certain Jews of Andalusia——"

"Hold, priest!" cried Almamen, impetuously; "thou didst name my child. Do I hear aright? Placed under the sacred charge of a king and a belted knight, has she—oh! answer me, I implore thee—been insulted by the licentious addresses of one of that king's own lineage? Answer! I am a Jew, but I am a father and a man."

"This pretended passion deceives us not," said the Dominican, who, himself cut off from the ties of life, knew nothing of their power. "Reply to the question put to thee; name thy accomplices."

"I have told thee all. Thou hast refused to answer me. I scorn and defy thee; my lips are closed."

The grand inquisitor glanced to his brethren and raised his hand. His assistants whispered each other; one of them rose and disappeared behind the canvas at the back of the tent. Presently the hangings were withdrawn, and the prisoner beheld an interior chamber, hung with various instruments, the nature of which was betrayed by their very shape; while by the rack, placed in the center of that dreary chamber, stood a tall and grisly figure, his arms bare, his eyes bent, as by an instinct, on the prisoner.

Almamen gazed at these dread preparations with an

unflinching aspect. The guards at the entrance of the tent approached; they struck off the fetters from his feet and hands; they led him toward the appointed place of torture.

Suddenly the Israelite paused.

"Priest," said he, in a more humble accent than he had yet assumed, "the tidings that thou didst communicate to me respecting the sole daughter of my house and love bewildered and confused me for the moment. Suffer me but for an instant to collect my senses, and I will answer without compulsion all thou mayst ask. Permit thy questions to be repeated."

The Dominican, whose cruelty to others seemed to himself sanctioned by his own insensibility to fear and contempt for bodily pain, smiled with bitter scorn at the apparent vacillation and weakness of the prisoner; but as he delighted not in torture merely for torture's sake, he motioned to the guards to release the Israelite; and replied, in a voice unnaturally mild and kindly, considering the circumstances of the scene.

"Prisoner, could we save thee from pain, even by the anguish of our own flesh and sinews, Heaven is our judge that we would willingly undergo the torture which, with grief and sorrow, we ordained to thee. Pause; take breath; collect thyself. Three minutes shalt thou have to consider what course to adopt ere we repeat the question. But then beware how thou triflest with our indulgence."

"It suffices; I thank thee," said the Hebrew, with a touch of gratitude in his voice. As he spoke he bent his face within his bosom, which he covered, as in profound meditation, with the folds of his long robe. Scarce half the brief time allowed him had expired when he again lifted his countenance, and, as he did so, flung back his garment. The Dominican uttered a loud cry; the guards started back in awe. A wonderful change had come over the intended victim; he seemed to stand among them literally wrapped in fire; flames burst from his lips, and played with his long locks, as, catching the glowing hue, they curled over his shoulders like serpents of burning light; blood-red were his breast and limbs, his haughty crest, and his out-stretched arm; and as, for a single moment, he met the shuddering eyes of his judges, he seemed, indeed, to verify all the superstitions of the time;

no longer the trembling captive, but the mighty demon or the terrible magician.

The Dominican was the first to recover his self-possession. "Seize the enchanter!" he exclaimed; but no man stirred. Ere yet the exclamation had died on his lip, Almamen took from his breast a phial, and dashed it on the ground; it broke into a thousand shivers; a mist rose over the apartment; it spread, thickened, darkened, as a sudden night; the lamps could not pierce it. The luminous form of the Hebrew grew dull and dim, until it vanished in the shade. On every eye blindness seemed to fall. There was a dead silence, broken by a cry and groan; and when, after some minutes, the darkness gradually dispersed, Almamen was gone. One of the guards lay bathed in blood upon the ground; they raised him; he had attempted to seize the prisoner and been stricken with a mortal wound. He died as he faltered forth the explanation. In the confusion and dismay of the scene, none noticed till long afterward that the prisoner had paused long enough to strip the dying guard of his long mantle; a proof that he feared his more secret arts might not suffice to bear him safe through the camp without the aid of worldly stratagem.

"The fiend hath been among us!" said the Dominican, solemnly, falling on his knees; "let us pray!"

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

ISABEL AND THE JEWISH MAIDEN.

WHILE this scene took place before the tribunal of Torquemada, Leila had been summoned from the indulgence of fears which her gentle nature and her luxurious nurturing had ill fitted her to contend against, to the

presence of the queen. That gifted and high-spirited princess, whose virtues were her own, whose faults were of her age, was not, it is true, without the superstition and something of the intolerant spirit of her royal spouse: but, even where her faith assented to persecution, her heart ever inclined to mercy; and it was her voice alone that ever counteracted the fiery zeal of Torquemada, and mitigated the sufferings of the unhappy ones who fell under the suspicion of heresy. She had happily, too, within her a strong sense of justice, as well as the sentiment of compassion; and often, when she could not save the accused, she prevented the consequences of his imputed crime falling upon the innocent members of his house or tribe.

In the interval between his conversation with Ferdinand and the examination of Almamen, the Dominican had sought the queen, and had placed before her, in glowing colors, not only the treason of Almamen, but the consequences of the impious passion her son had conceived for Leila. In that day any connection between a Christian knight and a Jewess was deemed a sin scarce expiable; and Isabel conceived all that horror of her son's offense which was natural in a pious mother and a haughty queen. But, despite all the arguments of the friar, she could not be prevailed upon to render up Leila to the tribunal of the Inquisition; and that dread court, but newly established, did not dare, without her consent, to seize upon one under the immediate protection of the queen.

"Fear not, father," said Isabel, with quiet firmness, "I will take upon myself to examine the maiden; and, at least, I will see her removed from all chance of tempting or being tempted by this graceless boy. But she was placed under charge of the king and myself as a hostage and a trust; we accepted the charge, and our royal honor is pledged to the safety of the maiden. Heaven forbid that I should deny the existence of sorcery, assured as we are of its emanation from the Evil One; but I fear, in this fancy of Juan's, that the maiden is more sinned against than sinning; and yet my son is, doubtless, not aware of the unhappy faith of the Jewess, the knowledge of which alone will suffice to cure him of his error. You shake your head, father; but, I repeat, I will act in this affair so as to merit the confidence I de

mand. Go, good Tomas. We have not reigned so long without belief in our power to control and deal with a simple maiden."

The queen extended her hand to the monk with a smile so sweet in dignity that it softened even that rugged heart; and with a reluctant sigh and a murmured prayer that her counsels might be guided for the best, Torquemada left the royal presence.

"The poor child!" thought Isabel; "those tender limbs and that fragile form are ill fitted for yon monk's stern tutelage. She seems gentle, and her face has in it all the yielding softness of our sex; doubtless, by mild means, she may be persuaded to abjure her wretched creed; and the shade of some holy convent may hide her alike from the licentious gaze of my son and the iron zeal of the inquisitor. I will see her."

When Leila entered the queen's pavilion, Isabel, who was alone, marked her trembling step with a compassionate eye; Leila, in obedience to the queen's request, threw up her vail, the paleness of her cheek and the traces of recent tears plead to Isabel's heart with more success than had attended all the pious invectives of Torquemada.

"Maiden," said Isabel, encouragingly, "I fear thou hast been strangely harassed by the thoughtless caprice of the young prince. Think of it no more. But, if thou art what I have ventured to believe, and to assert thee to be, cheerfully subscribe to the means I will suggest for preventing the continuance of addresses which cannot but injure thy fair name."

"Ah, madam!" said Leila, as she fell on one knee beside the queen, "most joyfully, most gratefully will I accept any asylum which proffers solitude and peace."

"The asylum to which I would fain lead thy steps," answered Isabel, gently, "is, indeed, one whose solitude is holy; whose peace is that of heaven. But of this hereafter. Thou wilt not hesitate, then, to leave the camp, unknown to the prince, and ere he can again seek thee?"

"Hesitate, madam! Ah! rather how shall I express my thanks?"

"I did not read that face misjudgingly," thought the queen, as she resumed; "Be it so; we will not lose another night. Withdraw yonder through the inner tent."

the litter shall be straight prepared for thee ; and, ere midnight, thou shalt sleep in safety under the roof of one of the bravest knights and noblest ladies that our realm can boast. Thou shalt bear with thee, maiden, a letter that shall commend thee specially to the care of thy hostess : thou wilt find her of a kindly and fostering nature. And oh, maiden !” added the queen, with benevolent warmth, “ steel not thy heart against her : listen with ductile senses to her gentle ministry ; and may God and his Son prosper that pious lady’s counsel, so that it may win a new strayling to the immortal fold !”

Leila listened and wondered, but made no answer ; until, as she gained the entrance to the interior division of the tent, she stopped abruptly, and said,

“ Pardon me, gracious queen, but dare I ask thee one question ? It is not of myself.”

“ Speak, and fear not.”

“ My father—hath aught been heard of him ? He promised that, ere the fifth day were past, he would once more see his child ; and, alas ! that date is past, and I am still alone in the dwelling of the stranger.”

“ Unhappy child,” muttered Isabel to herself, “ thou knowst not his treason nor his fate ; yet why shouldst thou ? Ignorant of what would render thee blessed hereafter, continue ignorant of what would afflict thee here. Be cheered, maiden,” answered the queen, aloud ; “ no doubt there are reasons sufficient to forbid your meeting. But thou shalt not lack friends in the dwelling-house of the stranger.”

“ Ah, noble queen, pardon me, and one word more. There hath been with me, more than once, a stern old man, whose voice freezes the blood within my veins ; he questions me of my father, and in the tone of a foe who would entrap from the child something to the peril of the sire. That man—thou knowst him, gracious queen—he cannot have the power to harm my father ?”

“ Peace, maiden ! the man thou speakst of is the priest of God, and the innocent have nothing to dread from his reverend zeal. For thyself, I say again, be cheered ; in the home to which I consign thee thou wilt see him no more. Take comfort, poor child ; weep not : all have their cares ; our duty is to bear in this life, reserving hope only for the next.”

The queen, destined herself to those domestic afflic-

tions which pomp cannot sooth, nor power allay, spoke with a prophetic sadness which yet more touched a heart that her kindness of look and tone had already softened; and in the impulse of a nature never tutored in the rigid ceremonials of that stately court, Leila suddenly came forward, and, falling on one knee, seized the hand of her protectress, and kissed it warmly through her tears.

"Are you, too, unhappy?" she said; "I will pray for you to my God!"

The queen, surprised and moved at an action which, had witnesses been present, would only, perhaps (for such is human nature), have offended her Castilian prejudices, left her hand in Leila's grateful clasp; and laying the other upon the parted and luxuriant ringlets of the kneeling maiden, said, gently, "And thy prayers shall avail thee and me when thy God and mine are the same. Bless thee, maiden! I am a mother, thou art motherless; bless thee!"

CHAPTER II.

THE TEMPTATION OF THE JEWESS, IN WHICH THE HISTORY
PASSES FROM THE OUTWARD TO THE INTERNAL.

It was about the very hour, almost the very moment, in which Almamen effected his mysterious escape from the tent of the Inquisition, that the train accompanying the litter which bore Leila, and which was composed of some chosen soldiers of Isabel's own body-guard, after traversing the camp, winding along that part of the mountainous defile which was in the possession of the Spaniards, and ascending a high and steep acclivity, halted before the gates of a strongly fortified castle renowned in the chronicles of that memorable war. The hoarse challenge of the sentry, the grating of jealous bars, the clank of hoofs upon the rough pavement of the courts, and the streaming glare of torches, falling upon stern and bearded visages, and imparting a ruddier glow to the moonlighted buttresses and battlements of the

fortress, aroused Leila from a kind of torpor rather than sleep, in which the fatigue and excitement of the day had steeped her senses. An old seneschal conducted her through vast and gloomy halls (how unlike the brilliant chambers and fantastic arcades of her Moorish home !) to a huge Gothic apartment, hung with the arras of Flemish looms. In a few moments, maidens, hastily aroused from slumber, grouped around her with a respect which would certainly not have been accorded had her birth and creed been known. They gazed with surprise at her extraordinary beauty and foreign garb, and evidently considered the new guest a welcome addition to the scanty society of the castle. Under any other circumstances, the strangeness of all she saw and the frowning gloom of the chamber to which she was consigned would have damped the spirits of one whose destiny had so suddenly passed from the deepest quiet into the sternest excitement. But any change was a relief to the roar of the camp, the addresses of the prince, and the ominous voice and countenance of Torquemada ; and Leila looked around her with the feeling that the queen's promise was fulfilled, and that she was already amidst the blessings of shelter and repose. It was long, however, before sleep revisited her eyelids, and when she woke the noonday sun streamed broadly through the lattice. By the bedside sat a matron advanced in years, but of a mild and prepossessing countenance, which only borrowed a yet more attractive charm from an expression of placid and habitual melancholy. She was robed in black ; but the rich pearls that were interwoven in the sleeves and stomacher, the jeweled cross that was appended from a chain of massive gold, and, still more, a certain air of dignity and command, bespoke, even to the inexperienced eye of Leila, the evidence of superior station.

"Thou hast slept late, daughter," said the lady, with a benevolent smile ; "may thy slumber have refreshed thee ! Accept my regrets that I knew not till this morning of thine arrival, or I should have been the first to welcome the charge of my royal mistress."

There was in the look, much more than in the words, of the Donna Inez de Quexada, a soothing and tender interest that was as balm to the heart of Leila ; in truth, she had been made the guest of, perhaps, the only lady in Spain of pure and Christian blood who did not despise

or execrate the name of Leila's tribe. Donna Inez had herself contracted to a Jew a debt of gratitude which she had sought to return to the whole race. Many years before the time in which our tale is cast, her husband and herself had been sojourning at Naples, then closely connected with the politics of Spain, upon an important state mission. They had then an only son, a youth of a wild and desultory character, whom the spirit of adventure lured to the East. In one of those sultry lands the young Quexada was saved from the hands of robbers by the caravanserai of a wealthy traveler. With this stranger he contracted that intimacy which wandering and romantic men often conceive for each other, without any other sympathy than that of the same pursuits. Subsequently he discovered that his companion was of the Jewish faith; and, with the usual prejudice of his birth and time, recoiled from the friendship he had solicited, and shrunk from the sense of the obligation he had incurred; he left his companion. Wearied at length with travel, he was journeying homeward, when he was seized with a sudden and virulent fever, mistaken for plague; all fled from the contagion of the supposed pestilence; he was left to die. One man discovered his condition; watched, tended, and, skilled in the deeper secrets of the healing art, restored him to life and health; it was the same Jew who had preserved him from the robbers. At this second and more inestimable obligation the prejudices of the Spaniard vanished; he formed a deep and grateful attachment for his preserver; they lived together for some time, and the Israelite finally accompanied the young Quexada to Naples. Inez retained a lively sense of the service rendered to her only son; and the impression had been increased, not only by the appearance of the Israelite, which, dignified and stately, bore no likeness to the cringing servility of his brethren, but also by the singular beauty and gentle deportment of his then newly-wed bride, whom he had wooed and won in that holy land, sacred equally to the faith of Christian and of Jew. The young Quexada did not long survive his return; his constitution was broken by long travel and the debility which followed his fierce disease. On his death-bed he had besought the mother whom he left childless, and whose Catholic prejudices were less stubborn than those of his sire,

never to forget the services a Jew had conferred upon him; to make the sole recompense in her power—the sole recompense the Jew himself had demanded; and to lose no occasion to soothe or mitigate the miseries to which the bigotry of the time often exposed the oppressed race of his deliverer.

Donna Inez had faithfully kept the promise she gave to the last scion of her house; and, through the power and reputation of her husband and her own connections, and still more through an early friendship with the queen, she had, on her return to Spain, been enabled to ward off many a persecution and many a charge on false pretenses, to which the wealth of some son of Israel made the cause, while his faith made the pretext. Yet, with all the natural feelings of a rigid Catholic, she had earnestly sought to render the favor she had thus obtained among the Jews minister to her pious zeal for their more than temporal warfare. She had endeavored by gentle means to make the conversions which force was impotent to effect; and, in some instances, her success had been signal. The good senora had thus obtained high renown for sanctity; and Isabel thought rightly, that she could not select a protectress for Leila who would more kindly shelter her youth or more strenuously labor for her salvation. It was, indeed, a dangerous situation for the adherence of the maiden to that faith which had cost her fiery father so many sacrifices to preserve and to advance.

It was by little and little that Donna Inez sought rather to undermine than to storm the mental fortress she hoped to man with spiritual allies; and, in her frequent conversations with Leila, she was at once perplexed and astonished by the simple and sublime nature of the belief upon which she waged war. For, whether it was that, in his desire to preserve Leila as much as possible from contact even with Jews themselves, whose general character (vitiated by the oppression which engendered meanness, and the extortion which fostered avarice) Almamen regarded with lofty though concealed repugnance; or whether it was that his philosophy did not interpret the Jewish formula of belief in the same spirit as the herd, the religion inculcated in the breast of Leila was different from that which Inez had ever before encountered among her proselytes. It was less mundane

and material ; a kind of passionate rather than metaphysical deism, which invested the great ONE, indeed, with many human sympathies and attributes, but still left him the august and awful God of Genesis, the Father of a universe, though the individual Protector of a petty and fallen sect. Her attention had been less directed to whatever appears, to a superficial gaze, stern and inexorable in the character of the Hebrew God, and which the religion of Christ so beautifully softened and so majestically refined, than to those passages in which his love watched over a chosen people, and his forbearance bore with their transgressions. Her reason had been worked upon to its belief by that mysterious and solemn agency, by which, when the whole world besides was bowed to the worship of innumerable deities and the adoration of graven images, in a small and secluded portion of earth, among a people far less civilized and philosophical than many by which they were surrounded, had been alone preserved a pure and sublime theism, disdaining a likeness in the things of heaven or earth. Leila knew little of the more narrow and exclusive tenets of her brethren ; a Jewess in name, she was rather a deist in belief—a deist of such a creed as Athenian schools might have taught to the imaginative pupils of Plato, save only that too dark a shadow had been cast over the hopes of another world.

Without the absolute denial of the Sadducee, Almamen had, probably, much of the quiet skepticism which belonged to many sects of the early Jews, and which still clings round the wisdom of the wisest who reject the doctrine of the Revelation ; and while he had not sought to eradicate from the breast of his daughter any of the vague desire which points to a hereafter, he had never, at least, directed her thoughts or aspirations to that solemn future. Nor in the sacred book which was given to her survey, and which so rigidly upheld the unity of the Supreme Power, was there that positive and unequivocal assurance of life beyond “the grave, where all things are forgotten,” that might supply the deficiencies of her mortal instructor. Perhaps, sharing those notions of the different value of the sexes, prevalent, from the remotest period, in his beloved and ancestral East, Almamen might have hopes for himself which did not extend to his child. And thus she grew up, with all the

beautiful faculties of the soul cherished and unfolded, without thought, without more than dim and shadowy conjectures of the Eternal Bourne to which the sorrowing pilgrim of the earth is bound. It was on this point that the quick eye of Donna Inez discovered her faith was vulnerable; who would not, if belief were voluntary, believe in the world to come? Leila's curiosity and interest were aroused; she willingly listened to her new guide; she willingly inclined to conclusions pressed upon her, not with menace, but persuasion. Free from the stubborn associations, the sectarian prejudices, and unversed in the peculiar traditions and accounts of the learned of her race, she found nothing to shock her in the volume which seemed but a continuation of the elder writings of her faith. The sufferings of the Messiah, his sublime purity, his meek forgiveness, spoke to her woman's heart; his doctrines elevated, while they charmed, her reason; and in the heaven that a Divine hand opened to all—the humble as the proud, the oppressed as the oppressor, to the woman as to the lords of the earth—she found a haven for all the doubts she had known, and for the despair which of late had darkened the face of the earth. Her home lost, the deep and beautiful love of her youth blighted, that was a creed almost irresistible which told her that grief was but for a day, that happiness was eternal. Far, too, from revolting such of the Hebrew pride of association as she had formed, the birth of the Messiah in the land of the Israelites seemed to consummate their peculiar triumph as the elected of Jehovah; and while she mourned for the Jews who persecuted the Saviour, she gloried in those whose belief had carried the name and worship of the descendants of David over the farthest regions of the world. Often she perplexed and startled the worthy Inez by exclaiming, "This your belief is the same as mine, adding only the assurance of immortal life; Christianity is but the Revelation of Judaism."

The wise and gentle instrument of Leila's conversion did not, however, give vent to those more Catholic sentiments which might have scared away the wings of the descending dove. She forbore, too, vehemently to point out the distinctions of the several creeds, and rather suffered them to melt insensibly one into the other: Leila was a Christian while she still believed herself a Jewess.

But in the fond and lovely weakness of mortal emotions, there was one bitter thought that often and often came to mar the peace that otherwise would have settled on her soul. That father, the sole softener of whose stern heart and mysterious fate she was, with what pangs would he receive the news of her conversion! And Muza, that bright and hero-vision of her youth—was she not setting the last seal of separation upon all hope of union with the idol of the Moors? But, alas! was she not already separated from him, and had not their faiths been from the first at variance? From these thoughts she started with sighs and tears; and before her stood the crucifix, already admitted into her chamber, and—not, perhaps, too wisely—banished so rigidly from the oratories of the Huguenot. For the representation of that divine resignation, that mortal agony, that miraculous sacrifice, what eloquence it hath for our sorrows! what preaching hath the symbol to the vanities of our wishes, to the yearnings of our discontent!

By degrees, as her new faith grew confirmed, Leila now inclined herself earnestly to those pictures of the sanctity and calm of the conventual life which Inez delighted to draw. In the reaction of her thoughts, and her despondency of all worldly happiness, there seemed to the young maiden an inexpressible charm in a solitude which was to release her forever from human love, and render her entirely up to sacred visions and imperishable hopes. And with this selfish there mingled a more generous and sublime sentiment. The prayers of a convert might be heard in favor of those yet benighted, and the awful curse upon her outcast race be lightened by the orisons of one humble heart. In all ages, in all creeds, a strange and mystic impression has existed of the efficacy of self-sacrifice in working the redemption even of a whole people; this belief, so strong in the old Orient and classic religions, was yet more confirmed by Christianity—a creed founded upon the grandest of historic sacrifices; and the lofty doctrine of which, rightly understood, perpetuates in the heart of every believer the duty of self-immolation, as well as faith in the power of prayer, no matter how great the object, how mean the supplicator. On these thoughts Leila meditated, till thoughts acquired the intensity of passions, and the conversion of the Jewess was completed.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOUR AND THE MAN.

It was on the third morning after the King of Grenada, reconciled to his people, had reviewed his gallant army in the Vivarambla; and Boabdil, surrounded by his chiefs and nobles, was planning a deliberate and decisive battle, by assault on the Christian camp, when a scout suddenly arrived, breathless, at the gates of the palace, to communicate the unlooked for and welcome intelligence that Ferdinand had in the night broken up his camp and marched across the mountains toward Cordova. In fact the outbreak of formidable conspiracies had suddenly rendered the appearance of Ferdinand necessary elsewhere; and, his intrigues with Almamen frustrated, he despaired of a very speedy conquest of the city. The Spanish king resolved, therefore, after completing the devastation of the Vega, to defer the formal and prolonged siege, which could alone place Grenada within his power, until his attention was no longer distracted to other foes, and until, it must be added, he had replenished an exhausted treasury. He had formed with Torquemada a vast and wide scheme of persecution, not only against Jews, but against Christians whose fathers had been of that race, and who were suspected of relapsing into Judaical practices. The two schemers of this grand design were actuated by different motives: the one wished to exterminate the crime, the other to sell forgiveness for it; and Torquemada connived at the griping avarice of the king because it served to give to himself and to the infant inquisition a power and authority which the Dominican foresaw would be soon greater even than those of royalty itself, and which, he imagined, by scourging earth, would redound to the interest of Heaven.

The strange disappearance of Almamen, which was distorted and exaggerated by the credulity of the Spaniards into an event of the most terrific character, served to complete the chain of evidence against the wealthy Jews and Jew-descended Spaniards of Andalusia; and while, in imagination, the king already clutched the gold

of their redemption here, the Dominican kindled the flame that was to light them to punishment hereafter.

Boabdil and his chiefs received the intelligence of the Spanish retreat with a doubt which soon yielded to the most triumphant delight. Boabdil at once resumed all the energy for which, though but by fits and starts, his earlier youth had been remarkable.

"*Allah Akbar ! God is great !*" cried he ; " we will not remain here till it suit the foe to confine the eagle again to his eyrie. They have left us—we will burst on them. Summon our *alfaquis*, we will proclaim a holy war ! The sovereign of the last possessions of the Moors is in the field. Not a town that contains a Moslem but shall receive our summons, and we will gather round our standard all the children of our faith !"

" May the king live forever !" cried the council, with one voice.

" Lose not a moment," resumed Boabdil ; " on to the *Vivarambla* ; marshal the troops ; Muza heads the cavalry, myself our foot. Ere the sun's shadow reach yonder forest, our army shall be on its march."

The warriors, hastily and in joy, left the palace ; and, when he was alone, Boabdil again relapsed into his wonted irresolution. After striding to and fro for some minutes in anxious thought, he abruptly left the hall of council, and passed into the more private chambers of the palace, till he came to a door strongly guarded by plates of iron. It yielded easily, however, to a small key which he carried in his girdle ; and Boabdil stood in a small circular room, apparently without other door or outlet ; but, after looking cautiously round, the king touched a secret spring in the wall, which, giving way, discovered a niche, in which stood a small lamp, burning with the purest naphtha, and a scroll of yellow parchment covered with strange letters and hieroglyphics. He thrust the scroll in his bosom, took the lamp in his hand, and pressing another spring within the niche, the wall receded and showed a narrow and winding staircase. The king reclosed the entrance and descended ; the stairs led at last into damp and rough passages ; and the murmur of waters, that reached his ear through the thick walls, indicated the subterranean nature of the soil through which they were hewn. The lamp burned clear and steady through the darkness of the place ; and Boabdil proceeded

with such impatient rapidity, that the distance (in reality considerable) which he traversed before he arrived at his destined bourne was quickly measured. He came at last into a wide cavern, guarded by doors concealed and secret as those which had screened the entrance from the upper air. He was in one of the many vaults which made the mighty cemetery of the monarchs of Grenada; and before him stood the robed and crowned skeleton, and before him glowed the magic dial-plate of which he had spoken in his interview with Muza.

"Oh, dread and awful image!" cried the king, throwing himself on his knees before the skeleton; "shadow of what was once a king, wise in council and terrible in war; if in those hollow bones yet lurks the impalpable and unseen spirit, hear thy repentant son. Forgive, while it is yet time, the rebellion of his fiery youth, and suffer thy daring soul to animate the doubt and weakness of his own. I go forth to battle, waiting not the signal thou didst ordain. Let not the penance for a rashness, to which fate urges me on, attach to my country, but to me; and if I perish in the field, may my evil destinies be buried with me, and a worthier monarch redeem my errors and preserve Grenada!"

As the king raised his looks, the unrelaxed grin of the grim dead, made yet more hideous by the mockery of the diadem and the royal robe, froze back to ice the passion and sorrow at his heart. He shuddered, and rose with a deep sigh; when, as his eyes mechanically followed the lifted arm of the skeleton, he beheld, with mingled delight and awe, the hitherto motionless finger of the dial-plate pass slowly on, and rest at the word so long and so impatiently desired. "Arm!" cried the king; "do I read aright? are my prayers heard?" A low and deep sound, like that of subterranean thunder, boomed through the chamber; and in the same instant the wall opened, and the king beheld the long-expected figure of Almamen the magician. But no longer was that stately form clad in the loose and peaceful garb of the Eastern santan. Complete armor cased his broad breast and sinewy limbs; his head alone was bare, and his prominent and impressive features were lighted, not with mystical enthusiasm, but with warlike energy. In his right hand he carried a drawn sword, his left supported the staff of a snow-white and dazzling banner.

So sudden was the apparition and so excited the mind of the king, that the sight of a supernatural being could scarcely have impressed him with more amaze and awe.

"King of Grenada," said Almamen, "the hour hath come at last : go forth and conquer ! With the Christian monarch there is no hope of peace or compact. At thy request I sought him, but my spells alone preserved the life of thy herald. Rejoice ! for thine evil destinies have rolled away from thy spirit like a cloud from the glory of the sun. The genii of the East have woven this banner from the rays of benignant stars. It shall beam before thee in the front of battle ; it shall rise over the rivers of Christian blood. As the moon sways the bosom of the tides, it shall sway and direct the surges and the course of war !"

"Man of mystery ! thou hast given me a new life."

"And, fighting by thy side," resumed Almamen, "I will assist to carve out for thee, from the ruins of Arragon and Castile, the grandeur of a new throne. Arm, monarch of Grenada !—arm ! I hear the neigh of thy charger in the midst of the mailed thousands ! Arm !"

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

LEILA IN THE CASTLE—THE SIEGE.

THE calmer contemplations and more holy anxieties of Leila were at length broken in upon by intelligence, the fearful interest of which absorbed the whole mind and care of every inhabitant of the castle. Boabdil el Chico had taken the field at the head of a numerous army. Rapidly scouring the country, he had descended, one after one, upon the principal fortresses which Ferdinand had left strongly garrisoned in the immediate neighborhood. His success was as immediate as it was signal ; the terror of his arms began once more to spread far and wide ; every day swelled his ranks with new re-

cruits ; from the snow-clad summits of the Sierra Nevada poured down, in wild hordes, the fierce mountain race, who, accustomed to eternal winter, made a strange contrast, in their rugged appearance and shaggy clothing, to the glittering and civilized soldiery of Grenada.

Moorish towns which had submitted to Ferdinand broke from their allegiance, and sent their ardent youth and experienced veterans to the standard of the Keys and Crescent. To add to the sudden panic of the Spaniards, it went forth that a formidable magician, who seemed inspired rather with the fury of a demon than the valor of a man, had made an abrupt appearance in the ranks of the Moslems. Wherever the Moors shrunk back from wall or tower, down which poured the boiling pitch or rolled the deadly artillery of the besieged, this sorcerer, rushing into the midst of the flagging force, and waving, with wild gestures, a white banner, supposed by both Moor and Christian to be the work of magic and preternatural spells, dared every danger and escaped every weapon ; with voice, with prayer, with example, he fired the Moors to an enthusiasm that revived the first days of Mohammedan conquest ; and tower after tower along the mighty range of the mountain chain of fortresses was polluted by the wave and glitter of the ever-victorious banner. The veteran Mendo de Quexada, who, with a garrison of two hundred and fifty men, held the castle of Alhendin, was, however, undaunted by the unprecedented successes of Boabdil. Aware of the approaching storm, he spent the days of peace yet accorded to him in making every preparation for the siege that he foresaw ; messengers were dispatched to Ferdinand ; new outworks were added to the castle ; ample store of provisions laid in ; and no precaution omitted that could still preserve to the Spaniards a fortress that, from its vicinity to Grenada, its command of the Vega and the valleys of the Alpuxarras, was the bitterest thorn in the side of the Moorish power.

It was early one morning that Leila stood by the lattice of her lofty chamber, gazing, with many and mingled emotions, on the distant domes of Grenada as they slept in the silent sunshine. Her heart, for the moment, was busy with the thoughts of home, and the chances and peril of the time were forgotten.

The sound of martial music afar off broke upon her

reveries ; she started and listened breathlessly ; it became more distinct and clear. The clash of the zell, the boom of the African drum, and the wild and barbarous blast of the Moorish clarion, were now each distinguishable from the other ; and at length, as she gazed and listened, winding along the steep of the mountain were seen the gleaming spears and pennants of the Moslem vanguard. Another moment and the whole castle was astir.

Mendo de Quexada, hastily arming, repaired himself to the battlements ; and, from her lattice, Leila beheld him, from time to time, stationing to the best advantage his scanty troops. In a few minutes she was joined by Donna Inez and the women of the castle, who fearfully clustered round their mistress ; not the less disposed, however, to gratify the passion of the sex by a glimpse through the lattice at the gorgeous array of the Moorish army.

The casements of Leila's chamber were peculiarly adapted to command a safe nor insufficient view of the progress of the enemy ; and with a beating heart and flushing cheek the Jewish maiden, deaf to the voices around her, imagined she could already descry amidst the horsemen the lion port and snowy garments of Muza Ben Abil Gazan.

What a situation was hers ! Already a Christian, could she hope for the success of the infidel ? Ever a woman, could she hope for the defeat of her lover ? But the time for meditation on her destiny was but brief ; the detachment of the Moorish cavalry was now just without the walls of the little town that girded the castle, and the loud clarion of the heralds summoned the garrison to surrender.

"Not while one stone stands upon another !" was the short answer of Quexada ; and, in ten minutes afterward, the sullen roar of the artillery broke from wall and tower over the vales below.

It was then that the women, from Leila's lattice, beheld, slowly marshaling themselves in order, the whole power and pageantry of the besieging army. Thick—serried—line after line, column upon column—they spread below the frowning steep. The sunbeams lighted up that goodly array, as it swayed, and murmured, and advanced, like the billows of a glittering sea. The royal standard was soon descried waving above the pavilion of Boabdil ; and the king himself, mounted on his

cream colored charger, which was covered with trappings of cloth of gold, was recognized among the infantry, whose task it was to lead the assault.

"Pray with us, my daughter!" cried Inez, falling on her knees. Alas! what could Leila pray for?

Four days and four nights passed away in that memorable siege; for the moon, then at her full, allowed no respite, even in night itself. Their numbers and their vicinity to Grenada gave the besiegers the advantage of constant relays, and troop succeeded to troop; so that the weary had ever successors in the vigor of new assailants.

On the fifth day all of the town, all of the fortress, save the keep (an immense tower), were in the hands of the Moslems; and in this last hold the worn-out and scanty remnant of the garrison mustered, in the last hope of a brave despair.

Quexada appeared, covered with gore and dust; his eyes bloodshot; his cheek haggard and hollow; his locks blanched with sudden age, in the hall of the tower, where the women, half dead with terror, were assembled.

"Food!" cried he, "food and wine! it may be our last banquet."

His wife threw her arms about him. "Not yet," he cried, "not yet; we will have one embrace before we part."

"Is there, then, no hope?" said Inez, with a pale cheek yet steady eye.

"None, unless to-morrow's dawn gild the spears of Ferdinand's army upon yonder hills. Till morn we may hold out." As he spoke he hastily devoured some morsels of food, drained a huge goblet of wine, and abruptly left the chamber.

At that moment the women distinctly heard the loud shouts of the Moors; and Leila, approaching the grated casement, could perceive the approach of what seemed to her like moving walls.

Covered by ingenious constructions of wood and thick hides, the besiegers advanced to the foot of the tower in comparative shelter from the burning streams which still poured, fast and seething, from the battlements; while in the rear came showers of darts and cross-bolts from the more distant Moors, protecting the work of the engineers, and piercing through almost every loophole and in the fortress.

Meanwhile the stalwart governor beheld, with dismay and despair, the preparations of the engineers, whom the wooden screen-works protected from every weapon.

"By the holy sepulchre!" cried he, gnashing his teeth, "they are mining the tower, and we shall be buried in its ruins! Look out, Gonsalvo! see you not a gleam of spears yonder over the mountains? Mine eyes are dim with watching."

"Alas! brave Mendo, it is only the sloping sun upon the snows; but there is hope yet."

The soldier's words terminated in a shrill and sudden cry of agony, and he fell dead by the side of Quexada, the brain crushed by a bolt from a Moorish arquebuse.

"My best warrior!" said Quexada; "peace be with him! Ho, there! see you yon desperate infidel urging on the miners? By the heavens above, it is he of the white banner! it is the sorcerer! Fire on him! he is without the shelter of the wood-works."

Twenty shafts, from wearied and nerveless arms, fell innocuous round the form of Almamen; and as, waving aloft his ominous banner, he disappeared again behind the shelter of the screen-works, the Spaniards almost fancied they could hear his exulting and demon laugh.

The sixth day came, and the work of the enemy was completed. The tower was entirely undermined; the foundations rested only on wooden props, which, with a humanity that was characteristic of Boabdil, had been placed there in order that the besieged might escape ere the final crash of their last hold.

It was now noon; the whole Moorish force, leaving the plain, occupied the steep that spread below the tower in multitudinous array and breathless expectation. The miners stood aloof; the Spaniards lay prostrate and exhausted upon the battlements, like mariners who, after every effort against the storm, await, resigned and almost indifferent, the sweep of the fatal surge.

Suddenly the lines of the Moors gave way; and Boabdil himself, with Muza at his right hand and Almamen on his left, advanced toward the foot of the tower. At the same time the Ethiopian guards—each bearing a torch—marched slowly in the rear; and from the midst of them paced the royal herald, and sounded the last warning. The hush of the immense armament; the glare of the torches, lighting the ebon faces and giant

forms of their bearers ; the majestic appearance of the king himself ; the heroic aspect of Muza ; the bare head and glittering banner of Almamen, all combined with the circumstances of the time to invest the spectacle with something singularly awful, and, perhaps, sublime.

Quexada turned his eyes mutely round the ghastly faces of his warriors, and still made not the signal. His lips muttered, his eyes glared ; when, suddenly, he heard below the wail of women ; and the thought of Inez, the bride of his youth, the partner of his age, came upon him ; and, with a trembling hand, he lowered the yet unquailing standard of Spain. Then the silence below broke into a mighty shout, which shook the grim tower to its unsteady and temporary base.

"Arise, my friends," he said, with a bitter sigh, "we have fought like men, and our country will not blush for us."

He descended the winding stair ; his soldiers followed him with faltering steps ; the gates of the keep unfolded, and these gallant Christians surrendered themselves to the Moor.

"Do with *us* as you will," said Quexada, as he laid the keys at the hoofs of Boabdil's barb ; "but there are women in the garrison who——"

"Are sacred," interrupted the king. "At once we accord their liberty and free transport whithersoever ye would desire. Speak, then ! To what place of safety shall they be conducted ?"

"Generous king !" replied the veteran Quexada, brushing away his tears with the back of his hand, "you take away the sting from our shame. We accept your offer in the same spirit in which it is made. Across the mountains, on the verge of the plain of Olfadez, I possess a small castle, ungarrisoned and unfortified. Thence, should the war take that direction, the women can readily obtain safe conduct to the queen at Cordova."

"Be it so," returned Boabdil. Then, with Oriental delicacy, selecting the eldest of the officers round him, he gave him instructions to enter the castle, and, with a strong guard, provide for the safety of the women according to the directions of Quexada. To another of his officers he confided the Spanish prisoners, and gave the signal to his army to withdraw from the spot, leav-

ing only a small body to complete the ruin of the fortress.

Accompanied by Almamen and his principal officers, Boabdil now hastened toward Grenada ; and while, with slower progress, Quexada and his companions, under a strong escort, took their way across the Vega, a sudden turn in their course brought abruptly before them the tower they had so valiantly defended. There it still stood, proud and stern, amidst the blackened and broken wrecks around it, shooting aloft, dark and grim, against the sky. Another moment, and a mighty crash sounded on their ears ; while the tower fell to the earth amidst volumes of wreathing smoke and showers of dust, which were borne by the concussion to the spot on which they took their last gaze of the proudest fortress on which the Moors of Grenada had beheld, from their own walls, the standard of Arragon and Castile.

At the same time, Leila—thus brought so strangely within the very reach of her father and her lover, and yet, by a mysterious fate, still divided from both—with Donna Inez, and the rest of the females of the garrison, pursued her melancholy path along the ridges of the mountains.



CHAPTER II.

ALMAMEN'S PROPOSED ENTERPRISE—THE THREE ISRAELITES : CIRCUMSTANCE IMPRESSES EACH CHARACTER WITH A VARYING DYE.

BOABDIL followed up his late success with a series of brilliant assaults on the neighboring fortresses. Grenada, like a strong man bowed to the ground, wrenched one after another, the bands that had crippled her liberty and strength ; and at length, after regaining a considerable portion of the surrounding territory, the king resolved to lay siege to the seaport of Salobrena. Could he obtain this town, Boabdil, by establishing communication between the sea and Grenada, would both be enabled to avail himself of the assistance of his African

allies, and also prevent the Spaniards from cutting off supplies to the city, should they again besiege it. Thither, then, accompanied by Muza, the Moorish king bore his victorious standard.

On the eve of his departure, Almamen sought the king's presence. A great change had come over the santon since the departure of Ferdinand; his wonted stateliness of mien was gone; his eyes were sunk and hollow; his manner disturbed and absent. In fact, his love for his daughter made the sole softness of his character; and that daughter was in the hands of the king who had sentenced the father to the tortures of the Inquisition! To what dangers might she not be subjected by the intolerant zeal of conversion! and could that frame and gentle heart brave the terrific engines that might be brought against her fears? "Better," thought he, "that she should perish, even by the torture, than adopt that hated faith." He gnashed his teeth in agony at either alternative. His dreams, his objects, his revenge, his ambition, all forsook him: one single hope, one thought, completely mastered his stormy passions and fitful intellect.

In this mood the pretended santon met Boabdil. He represented to the king, over whom his influence had prodigiously increased since the late victories of the Moors, the necessity of employing the armies of Ferdinand at a distance. He proposed, in furtherance of this policy, to venture himself in Cordova; to endeavor strictly to stir up those Moors in their ancient kingdom who had succumbed to the Spanish yoke, and whose hopes might naturally be inflamed by the recent successes of Boabdil; and, at least, to foment such disturbances as might afford the king sufficient time to complete his designs, and recruit his force by aid of the powers with which he was in league.

The representations of Almamen at length conquered Boabdil's reluctance to part with his sacred guide, and it was finally arranged that the Israelite should at once depart from the city.

As Almamen pursued homeward his solitary way, he found himself suddenly accosted in the Hebrew tongue. He turned hastily, and saw before him an old man in the Jewish gown; he recognized Elias, one of the wealthiest and most eminent of the race of Israel.

"Pardon me, wise countryman!" said the Jew, bowing to the earth, "but I cannot resist the temptation of claiming kindred with one through whom the horn of Israel may be so triumphantly exalted."

"Hush, man!" said Almamen, quickly, and looking sharply round: "I thy countryman! Art thou not, as thy speech betokens, an Israelite?"

"Yea," returned the Jew, "and of the same tribe as thy honored father—peace be with his ashes! I remembered thee at once, boy though thou wert when thy steps shook off the dust against Grenada. I remembered thee, I say, at once, on thy return; but I have kept thy secret, trusting that, through thy soul and genius, thy fallen brethren might put off sackcloth and feast upon the housetops."

Almamen looked hard at the keen, sharp, Arab features of the Jew; and at length he answered: "And how can Israel be restored? wilt thou fight for her?"

"I am too old, son of Issachar, to bear arms; but our tribes are many and our youth strong. Amidst these disturbances between dog and dog——"

"The lion may get his own," interrupted Almamen, impetuously; "let us hope it. Hast thou heard of the new persecutions against us that the false Nazarene king has already commenced in Cordova—persecutions that make the heart sick and the blood cold?"

"Alas!" replied Elias, "such woes, indeed, have not failed to reach mine ear; and I have kindred, near and beloved kindred, wealthy and honored men, scattered throughout that land."

"Were it not better that they should die on the field than by the rack?" exclaimed Almamen, fiercely. "God of my fathers! if there be yet a spark of manhood left among thy people, let thy servant fan it to a flame, that shall burn as the fire burns the stubble, so that the earth may be bare before the blaze!"

"Nay," said Elias, dismayed rather than excited by the vehemence of his comrade, "be not rash, son of Issachar, be not rash; peradventure thou wilt but exasperate the wrath of the rulers, and our substance thereby will be utterly consumed."

Almamen drew back, placed his hand quietly on the Jew's shoulder, looked him hard in the face, and gently laughing, turned away.

Elias did not attempt to arrest his steps. "Impracticable," he muttered; "impracticable and dangerous! I always thought so. He may do us harm; were he not so strong and fierce, I would put my knife under his left rib. Verily, gold is a great thing; and—out on me! the knaves at home will be wasting the oil now they know old Elias is abroad." Thereat the Jew drew his cloak round him and quickened his pace.

Almamen in the meanwhile sought, through dark and subterranean passages known only to himself, his accustomed home. He passed much of the night alone; but, ere the morning star announced to the mountain tops the presence of the sun, he stood, prepared for his journey, in his secret vault, by the door of the subterranean passages, with old Ximen beside him.

"I go, Ximen," said Almamen, "upon a doubtful quest; whether I discover my daughter, and succeed in bearing her in safety from their contaminating grasp, or whether I fall into their snares and perish, there is an equal chance that I may return no more to Grenada. Should this be so, you will be heir to such wealth as I leave in these places; I know that your age will be consoled for the lack of children when your eyes look upon the laugh of gold."

Ximen bowed low, and mumbled out some inaudible protestations and thanks. Almamen sighed heavily as he looked round the room. "I have evil omens in my soul, and evil prophecies in my books," said he, mournfully. "But the worst is here," he added, putting his finger significantly to his temples; "the string is stretched—one more blow would snap it."

As he thus said he opened the door, and vanished through that labyrinth of galleries by which he was enabled at all times to reach unobserved either the palace of the Alhambra or the gardens without the gates of the city.

Ximen remained behind a few moments in deep thought. "All mine if he dies!" said he, "all mine if he does not return! All mine, all mine! and I have not a child or kinsman in the world to clutch it away from me!" With that he locked the vault and returned to the upper air.

CHAPTER III.

THE FUGITIVE AND THE MEETING.

IN their different directions the rival kings were equally successful. Salobrena, but lately conquered by the Christians, was thrown into a commotion by the first glimpse of Boabdil's banners; the populace rose, beat back their Christian guards, and opened the gates to the last of their race of kings. The garrison alone, to which the Spaniards retreated, resisted Boabdil's arms; and, defended by impregnable walls, promised an obstinate and bloody siege.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand had no sooner entered Cordova than his extensive scheme of confiscation and holy persecution commenced. Not only did more than five hundred Jews perish in the dark and secret gripe of the grand inquisitor, but several hundred of the wealthiest Christian families, in whose blood was detected the hereditary Jewish taint, were thrown into prison, and such as were most fortunate purchased life by the sacrifice of half their treasures. At this time, however, there suddenly broke forth a formidable insurrection among these miserable subjects—the Messenians of the Iberian Sparta. The Jews were so far aroused from their long debasement by omnipotent despair, that a single spark, falling on the ashes of their ancient spirit, rekindled the flame of the descendants of the fierce warriors of Palestine. They were encouraged and assisted by the suspected Christians who had been involved in the same persecution; and the whole were headed by a man who appeared suddenly among them, and whose fiery eloquence and martial spirit produced, at such a season, the most fervent enthusiasm. Unhappily, the whole details of this singular outbreak are withheld from us; only by wary hints and guarded allusions do the Spanish chroniclers apprise us of its existence and its perils. It is clear that all narrative of an event that might afford the most dangerous precedents, and was alarming to the pride and avarice of the Spanish king, as well as the pious zeal of the church, was strictly forbidden; and the conspiracy was hushed

in the dread silence of the Inquisition, into whose hands the principal conspirators ultimately fell. We learn only, that a determined and sanguinary struggle was followed by the triumph of Ferdinand and the complete extinction of the treason.

It was one evening that a solitary fugitive, hard chased by an armed troop of the brothers of St. Hermadad, was seen emerging from a wild and rocky defile, which opened abruptly on the gardens of a small, and, by the absence of fortifications and sentries, seemingly deserted castle. Behind him, in the exceeding stillness which characterizes the air of a Spanish twilight, he heard, at a considerable distance, the blast of the horn and the tramp of hoofs. His pursuers, divided into several detachments, were scouring the country after him, as the fishermen draw their nets from bank to bank, conscious that the prey they drive before the meshes cannot escape them at the last. The fugitive halted in doubt, and gazed round him; he was well nigh exhausted; his eyes were bloodshot; the large drops rolled fast down his brow; his whole frame quivered and palpitated like that of a stag when he stands at bay. Beyond the castle spread a broad plain, far as the eye could reach, without shrub or hollow to conceal his form; flight across a space so favorable to his pursuers was evidently in vain. No alternative was left unless he turned back on the very path taken by the horsemen, or trusted to such scanty and perilous shelter as the copses in the castle garden might afford him. He decided on the latter refuge, cleared the low and lonely wall that girded the demesne, and plunged into a thicket of overhanging oaks and chesnuts.

At that hour and in that garden, by the side of a little fountain, were seated two females; the one of mature and somewhat advanced years, the other in the flower of virgin youth. But the flower was prematurely faded; and neither the bloom, nor sparkle, nor undulating play of features that should have suited her age was visible in the marble paleness and contemplative sadness of her beautiful countenance.

"Alas! my young friend," said the elder of these ladies, "it is in these hours of solitude and calm that we are most deeply impressed with the nothingness of life. Thou, my sweet convert, art now the object, no

longer of my compassion, but my envy ; and earnestly do I feel convinced of the blessed repose thy spirit will enjoy in the lap of the Mother Church. Happy are they who die young ; but thrice happy they who die in the spirit rather than the flesh : dead to sin, but not to virtue ; to terror, not to hope ; to man, but not to God !”

“Dear senora,” replied the young maiden, mournfully, “were I alone on earth, Heaven is my witness with what deep and thankful resignation I should take the holy vows and forswear the past ; but the heart remains human, however divine the hope that it may cherish. And sometimes I start and think of home, of childhood, of my strange but beloved father, deserted and childless in his old age.”

“Thine, Leila,” returned the elder senora, “are but the sorrows our nature is doomed to. What matter whether absence or death sever the affections ? Thou lamentest a father, I a son, dead in the pride of his youth and beauty ; a husband, languishing in the fetters of the Moor. Take comfort for thy sorrows in the reflection that sorrow is the heritage of all.”

Ere Leila could reply, the orange-boughs that sheltered the spot where they sat were put aside, and between the women and the fountain stood the dark form of Almamen the Israelite. Leila rose, shrieked, and flung herself, unconscious, on his breast.

“O Lord of Israel !” cried Almamen, in a tone of deep anguish, “do I, then, at last regain my child ? do I press her to my heart ? and is it only for that brief moment when I stand upon the brink of death ? Leila, my child, look up ! smile upon thy father ; let him feel on his maddening and burning brow the sweet breath of the last of his race, and bear with him at least one holy and gentle thought to the dark grave.”

“My father ! is it indeed my father ?” said Leila, recovering herself, and drawing back that she might assure herself of that familiar face ; “it is thou ! it is—it is ! Oh ! what blessed chance brings us together ?”

“That chance is the destiny which now guides me to my tomb,” answered Almamen, solemnly. “Hark ! hear you not the sound of their rushing steeds—their impatient voices ? They are on me now !”

“Who ? Of whom speakst thou ?”

“My pursuers—the horsemen of the Spaniard.”

"Oh, *senora*, save him !" cried Leila, turning to Donna Inez, whom both father and child had hitherto forgotten, and who now stood gazing upon Almamen with wondering and anxious eyes. "Whither can he fly? The vaults of the castle may conceal him. This way—hasten !"

"Stay !" said Inez, trembling, and approaching close to Almamen ; "do I see aright ? and, amidst the dark changes of years and trial, do I recognize that stately form which once contrasted to the sad eye of a mother the drooping and faded form of her only son ? Art thou not he who saved my boy from the pestilence, who accompanied him to the shores of Naples, and consigned him to these arms ? Look on me ! dost thou not recall the mother of thy friends ?"

"I recall thy features dimly and as in a dream," answered the Hebrew ; "and, while thou speakst, rush upon me the memories of an earlier time, in lands where Leila first looked upon the day, and her mother sung to me at sunset by the rush of the Euphrates and on the sites of departed empires. Thy son I remember now : I had friendship then with a Christian, for I was still young."

"Waste not the time—father—*senora* !" cried Leila, impatiently, clinging still to her father's breast.

"You are right ; nor shall your sire, in whom I thus wonderfully recognize my son's friend, perish, if I can save him."

Inez then conducted her strange guest to a small door in the rear of the castle ; and, after leading him through some of the principal apartments, left him in one of the wardrobes or tiring-rooms adjoining her own chamber, and the entrance to which the arras concealed. She rightly judged this a safer retreat than the vaults of the castle might afford, since her great name and known intimacy with Isabel would preclude all suspicion of her abetting in the escape of the fugitive, and keep those places the most secure in which, without such aid, he could not have secreted himself.

In a few minutes several of the troop arrived at the castle ; and, on learning the name of its owner, contented themselves with searching the gardens, and the lower and more exposed apartments ; and then, recommending to the servants a vigilant look-out, remounted, and pro-

ceeded to scour the plain, over which now slowly fell the starlight and shade of night.

When Leila stole at last to the room in which Almamen was hid, she found him stretched on his mantle in a deep sleep. Exhausted by all he had undergone, and his rigid nerves, at it were, relaxed by the sudden softness of that interview with his child, the slumber of that fiery wanderer was as calm as an infant's. And their relation almost seemed reversed, and the daughter to be as a mother watching over her offspring, when Leila seated herself softly by him, fixing her eyes, to which the tears came ever, ever to be brushed away, upon his worn but tranquil features, made yet more serene by the quiet light that glimmered through the casement. And so passed the hours of that night; and the father and the child, the meek convert and the revengeful fanatic, were under the same roof.

CHAPTER IV.

ALMAMEN HEARS AND SEES, BUT REFUSES TO BELIEVE;
FOR THE BRAIN, OVERWROUGHT, GROWS DULL
EVEN IN THE KEENEST.

THE dawn broke slowly upon the chamber, and Almamen still slept. It was the Sabbath of the Christians; that day on which the Saviour rose from the dead; thence named, so emphatically and sublimely by the early church, *THE LORD'S DAY*.* And, as the ray of the sun flashed in the east, it fell like a glory over a crucifix, placed in the deep recess of the Gothic casement, and brought startlingly before the eyes of Leila that face upon which the rudest of the Catholic sculptors rarely fail to preserve the mystic and awful union of the expiring anguish of the man with the lofty patience of the God. It looked upon her, that face; it invited, it en-

* Before the Christian era the Sunday was, however, called the Lord's day, *i.e.*, the day of the Lord the Sun.

couraged, while it thrilled and subdued. She stole gently from the side of her father ; she crept to the spot, and flung herself on her knees beside the consecrated image.

"Support me, O Redeemer !" she murmured ; "support thy creature ! strengthen her steps in the blessed path, through it divide her irrevocably from all that on earth she loves ; and if there be a sacrifice in her solemn choice, accept, O Thou the Crucified ! accept it in part atonement for the crime of her stubborn race ; and hereafter let the lips of a maiden of Judea implore Thee, not in vain, for some mitigation of the awful curse that hath fallen justly upon her tribe."

As, broken by low sobs, and in a choked and muttered voice, Leila poured forth her prayer, she was startled by a deep groan ; and, turning in alarm, she saw that Almamen had awakened, and, leaning on his arm, was now bending upon her his dark eyes, once more gleaming with all their wonted fire.

"Speak," he said, as she coweringly hid her face ; "speak to me, or I shall be turned to stone by one horrid thought. It is not before that symbol that thou kneelst in adoration ! and my sense wanders if it tell me that thy broken words expressed the worship of an apostate ! In mercy, speak !"

"Father !" began Leila ; but her lips refused to utter more than that touching and holy word.

Almamen rose, and, plucking the hands from her face, gazed on her some moments as if he would penetrate her very soul ; and Leila, recovering her courage in the pause, by degrees met his eyes unquailing ; her pure and ingenuous brow raised to his, and sadness, but not guilt, speaking from every line of that lovely face.

"Thou dost not tremble," said Almamen, at length, breaking the silence, "and I have erred. Thou art not the criminal I deemed thee. Come to my arms !"

"Alas !" said Leila, obeying the instinct, and casting herself upon that rugged bosom, "I will dare, at least, not to disavow my God. Father ! by that dread anathema which is on our race, which has made us homeless and powerless, outcasts and strangers in the land ; by the persecution and anguish we have known, teach thy lordly heart that we are rightly punished for the persecution and the anguish we doomed to Him whose footstep hallowed our native earth ! FIRST, IN THE HISTORY OF

THE WORLD, DID THE STERN HEBREWS INFLICT UPON MANKIND THE AWFUL CRIME OF PERSECUTION FOR OPINION'S SAKE. The seed we sowed hath brought forth the Dead Sea fruit upon which we feed. I asked for resignation and for hope. I looked upon yonder cross and I found both. Harden not thy heart; listen to thy child; wise though thou be, and weak though her woman spirit, listen to me."

"Be dumb!" cried Almamen, in such a voice as might have come from the charnel, so ghostly and deathly sounded its hollow tone; then, recoiling some steps, he placed both his hands upon his temples, and muttered, "Mad, mad! yes, yes, this is but a delirium, and I am tempted with a devil! Oh, my child!" he resumed, in a voice that became, on the sudden, inexpressibly tender and imploring, "I have been sorely tried, and I dreamed a feverish dream of passion and revenge. Be thine the lips and thine the soothing hand that shall wake me from it. Let us fly forever from these hated lands; let us leave to these miserable infidels their bloody contest, careless which shall fall. To a soil on which the iron heel does not clang, to an air where man's orisons rise in solitude to the great Jehovah, let us hasten our wearied steps. Come! while the castle yet sleeps, let us forth unseen—the father and the child. We will hold sweet commune by the way. And hark ye, Leila," he added, in a low and abrupt whisper, "talk not to me of yonder symbol: for thy God is a jealous God, and hath no likeness in the graven image."

Had he been less exhausted by long travail and rack-ing thoughts, far different, perhaps, would have been the language of a man so stern. But circumstance impresses the hardest substance; and despite his native intellect and affected superiority over others, no one, perhaps, was more human in his fitful moods, his weakness and his strength, his passion and his purpose, than that strange man, who had dared, in his dark studies and arrogant self-will, to aspire beyond humanity.

That was, indeed, a perilous moment for the young convert. The unexpected softness of her father utterly subdued her; nor was she yet sufficiently possessed of that all-denying zeal of the Catholic enthusiast, to which every human tie and earthlier duty has been often sacrificed on the shrine of a rapt and metaphysical piety. Whatever her opinions, her new creed, her secret desire

of the cloister—fed, as it was, by the sublime though fallacious notion, that in her conversion, her sacrifice, the crimes of her race might be expiated in the eyes of Him whose death had been the great atonement of a world ; whatever such higher thoughts and sentiments, they gave way at that moment to the irresistible impulse of household nature and of filial duty. Should she desert her father, and could that desertion be a virtue? her heart put ar 4 answered both questions in a breath. She approached Almamen, placed her hand in his, and said, steadily and calmly, “Father, wheresoever thou goest, I will wend with thee.”

But Heaven ordained to each another destiny than might have theirs had the dictates of that impulse been fulfilled.

Ere Almamen could reply, a trumpet sounded clear and loud at the gate.

“Hark !” he said, griping his dagger and starting back to a sense of the dangers round him. “They come—my pursuers and my murderers ! but these limbs are sacred from the rack.”

Even that sound of ominous danger was almost a relief to Leila ; “I will go,” she said, “and learn what the blast betokens ; remain here—be cautious—I will return.”

Several minutes, however, elapsed before Leila reappeared : she was accompanied by Donna Inez, whose paleness and agitation betokened her alarm. A courier had arrived at the gate to announce the approach of the queen, who, with a considerable force, was on her way to join Ferdinand, then, in the usual rapidity of his movements, before one of the Moorish towns that had revolted from his allegiance. It was impossible for Almamen to remain in safety in the castle ; and the only hope of escape was departing immediately and in disguise.

“I have,” she said, “a trusty and faithful servant with me in the castle, to whom I can, without anxiety, confide the charge of your safety ; and, even if suspected by the way, my name and the companionship of my servant will remove all obstacles ; it is not a long journey hence to Guadix, which has already revolted to the Moors : there, till the armies of Ferdinand surround the walls, your refuge may be secure.”

Almam-n remained for some moments plunged in a gloomy silence. But at length he signified his assent to the plan proposed, and Donna Inez hastened to give the directions to his intended guide.

"Leila," said the Hebrew, when left alone with his daughter, "think not that it is for mine own safety that I stoop to this flight from thee. No: but never till thou wert lost to me by my own rash confidence in another, did I know how dear to my heart was the last scion of my race, the sole memorial left to me of thy mother's love. Regaining thee once more, a new and a soft existence opens upon my eyes; and the earth seems to change as by a sudden revolution from winter into spring. For thy sake I consent to use all the means that man's intellect can devise for preservation from my foes. Meanwhile, here will rest my soul; to this spot, within one week from this period—no matter through what danger I pass—I shall return: then I shall claim thy promise. I will arrange all things for our flight, and no stone shall harm thy footstep by the way. The Lord of Israel be with thee, my daughter, and strengthen thy heart! But," he added, tearing himself from her embrace as he heard steps ascending to the chamber, "deem not that, in this most fond and fatherly affection, I forget what is due to me and thee. Think not that my love is only the brute and insensate feeling of the progenitor to the offspring: I love thee for thy mother's sake; I love thee for thine own; I love thee yet more for the sake of Israel. If thou perish, if thou art lost to us, thou, the last daughter of the house of Issachar, then the haughtiest family of God's great people is extinct."

Here Inez appeared at the door, but withdrew at the impatient and lordly gesture of Almamen, who, without further heed of the interruption, resumed:

"I look to thee and thy seed for the regeneration which I once trusted, fool that I was, mine own day might see effected. Let this pass. Thou art under the roof of the Nazarene. I will not believe that the arts we have resisted against fire and sword can prevail with thee. But, if I err, awful will be the penalty! Could I once know that thou hadst forsaken thy ancestral creed, though warrior and priest stood by thee, though thousands and ten thousands were by thy right hand, this

steel shall save the race of Issachar from dishonor. Beware ! Thou weapest ; but, child, I warn, not threaten. God be with thee !”

He wrung the cold hand of his child, turned to the door, and, after such disguise as the brief time allowed him could afford, left the castle with his Spanish guide, who, accustomed to the benevolence of his mistress, obeyed her injunction without wonder, though not without suspicion.

The third part of an hour had scarcely elapsed, and the sun was yet on the mountain tops, when Isabel arrived.

She came to announce that the outbreaks of the Moorish towns in the vicinity rendered the half-fortified castle of her friend no longer a secure abode ; and she honored the Spanish lady with a command to accompany her, with her female suite, to the camp of Ferdinand.

Leila received the intelligence with a kind of stupor. Her interview with her father, the strong and fearful contests of emotion which that interview occasioned, left her senses faint and dizzy ; and when she found herself, by the twilight star, once more with the train of Isabel, the only feeling that stirred actively through her stunned and bewildered mind was, that the hand of Providence conducted her from a temptation that, the Reader of all hearts knew, the daughter and the woman would have been too feeble to resist.

On the fifth day from his departure, Almamen returned to find the castle deserted and his daughter gone.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE FERMENT OF GREAT EVENTS THE DREGS RISE

THE Israelites did not limit their struggles to the dark conspiracy to which allusion has been made. In some of the Moorish towns that revolted from Ferdinand they renounced the neutrality they had hitherto

maintained between Christian and Moslem. Whether it was that they were inflamed by the fearful and wholesale barbarities enforced by Ferdinand and the Inquisition against their tribe ; or whether they were stirred up by one of their own order, in whom was recognized the head of their most sacred family ; or whether, as is most probable, both causes combined, certain it is that they manifested a feeling that was thoroughly unknown to the ordinary habits and policy of that peaceable people. They bore great treasure to the public stock ; they demanded arms, and, under their own leaders, were admitted, though with much jealousy and precaution, into the troops of the arrogant and disdainful Moslems.

In this conjunction of hostile planets, Ferdinand had recourse to his favorite policy of wile and stratagem. Turning against the Jews the very treaty Almamen had once sought to obtain in their favor, he caused it to be circulated, privately, that the Jews, anxious to purchase their peace with him, had promised to betray the Moorish towns, and Grenada itself, into his hands. The paper which Ferdinand himself had signed in his interview with Almamen, and of which, on the capture of the Hebrew, he had taken care to repossess himself, he gave to a spy, whom he sent, disguised as a Jew, into one of the revolted cities.

Private intelligence reached the Moorish ringleader of the arrival of this envoy. He was seized, and the document found on his person. The form of the words drawn up by Almamen (who had carefully omitted mention of his own name, whether that which he assumed, or that which, by birth, he should have borne) merely conveyed the compact that if, by a Jew, within two weeks from the date therein specified, Grenada was delivered to the Christian king, the Jews should enjoy certain immunities and rights.

The discovery of this document filled the Moors of the city to which the spy had been sent, with a fury that no words can describe. Always distrusting their allies, they now imagined they perceived the sole reason of their sudden enthusiasm, of their demand for arms. The mob rose : the principal Jews were seized and massacred without trial ; some by the wrath of the multitude, some by the slower tortures of the magistrate. Messengers were sent to the different revolted towns,

and, above all, to Grenada itself, to put the Moslems on their guard against these unhappy enemies of either party. At once covetous and ferocious, the Moors rivalled the Inquisition in their cruelty and Ferdinand in their extortion.

It was the dark fate of Almamen, as of most premature and heated liberators of the enslaved, to double the terrors and the evils he had sought to cure. The warning arrived at Grenada at a time in which the vizier, Jusuf, had received the commands of his royal master, still at the siege of Salobrena, to use every exertion to fill the wasing treasuries. Fearful of new exactions against the Moors, the vizier hailed as a message from Heaven so just a pretext for a new and sweeping impost on the Jews. The spendthrift violence of the mob was restrained, because it was headed by the authorities, who were wisely anxious that the state should have no rival in the plunder it required; and the work of confiscation and robbery was carried on with a majestic and calm regularity, which redounded no less to the credit of Jussuf than it contributed to the coffers of the king.

It was late one evening when Ximen was making his usual round through the chambers of Almamen's house. As he glanced around at the various articles of wealth and luxury, he ever and anon burst into a low, fitful chuckle, rubbed his lean hands, and mumbled out, "If my master should die! if my master should die!"

While thus engaged he heard a confused and distant shout, and, listening attentively, he distinguished a cry, grown of late sufficiently familiar, of, "Live Jusuf the just! perish the traitor Jews!"

"Ah!" said Ximen, as the whole character of his face changed, "some new robbery upon our race! And this is thy work, son of Issachar! Madman that thou wert, to be wiser than thy sires, and seek to dupe the idolaters in the council-chamber and the camp, their field, their vantage-ground, as the bazar and the market-place are ours. None suspect that the potent santón is the traitor Jew; but I know it! I could give thee to the bowstring; and, if thou wert dead, all thy goods and gold, even to the mule at the manger, would be old Ximen's."

He paused at that thought, shut his eyes, and smiled at the prospect his fancy conjured up; and, completing his survey, retired to his own chamber, which opened by

a small door upon one of the back courts. He had scarcely reached the room when he heard a low tap at the outer door, and when it was thrice repeated he knew that it was one of his Jewish brethren ; for Ximen, as years, isolation and avarice gnawed away whatever of virtue once put forth some meager fruit from a heart naturally bare and rocky, still preserved one human feeling toward his countrymen. It was the bond which unites all the persecuted ; and Ximen loved them because he could not envy their happiness. The power, the knowledge, the lofty though wild designs of his master, stung and humbled him : he secretly hated, because he could not compassionate or condemn him. But the bowed frame, and slavish yoke, and timid nerves of his crushed brotherhood presented to the old man the likeness of things that could not exult over him. Debased and aged, and solitary as he was, he felt a kind of wintry warmth in the thought that even *he* had the power to protect !

He thus maintained an intercourse with his fellow Israelites ; and often, in their dangers, had afforded them a refuge in the numerous vaults and passages, the ruins of which may be still descried beneath the moldering foundations of that mysterious mansion. And, as the house was generally supposed the property of an absent emir, and had been especially recommended to the care of the cadis by Boabdil, who alone of the Moors knew it as one of the dwelling-places of the santón, whose ostensible residence was in apartments allotted to him within the palace, it was, perhaps, the sole place within Grenada which afforded an unsuspected and secure refuge to the hunted Israelites.

When Ximen recognized the wonted signal of his brethren, he crawled to the door ; and, after the precaution of a Hebrew watch-word, replied to in the same tongue, he gave admittance to the tall and stooping frame of the rich Elias.

"Worthy and excellent master !" said Ximen, after again securing the entrance ; "what can bring the honored and wealthy Elias to the chamber of the poor hireling ?"

"My friend," answered the Jew, "call me not wealthy or honored. For years I have dwelt within the city safe and respected, even by the Moslemin ; verily and because I have purchased, with jewels and treasure, the protec-

tion of the king and the great men. But now, alas ! in the sudden wrath of the heathen, ever imagining vain things, I have been summoned into the presence of their chief rabbi, and only escaped the torture by a sum that ten years of labor and the sweat of my brow cannot replace. Ximen ! the bitterest thought of all is, that the frenzy of one of our own tribe has brought this desolation upon Israel."

"My lord speaks riddles," said Ximen, with well-feigned astonishment in his glassy eyes.

"Why dost thou wind and turn, good Ximen ?" said the Jew, shaking his head ; "thou knowest well what my words drive at. Thy master is the pretended Almannen ; and that recreant Israelite (if Israelite, indeed, still be one who hath forsaken the customs and the forms of his forefathers) is he who hath stirred up the Jews of Cordova and Guadix, and whose folly hath brought upon us these dread things. Holy Abraham ! this Jew hath cost me more than fifty Nazarenes and a hundred Moors."

Ximen remained silent ; and the tongue of Elias being loosed by the recollection of his sad loss, the latter continued : "At the first, when the son of Issachar reappeared and became a counselor in the king's court, I indeed, who had led him, then a child, to the synagogue—for old Issachar was to me dear as a brother—recognized him by his eyes and voice ; but I exulted in his craft and concealment ; I believed he would work mighty things for his poor brethren, and would obtain for his father's friend the supplying of the king's wives and concubines with raiment and cloth of price. But years have passed ; he hath not lightened our burdens ; and, by the madness that hath of late come over him, heading the heathen armies, and drawing our brethren into danger and death, he hath deserved the curse of the synagogue and the wrath of our whole race. I find, from our brethren who escaped the Inquisition by the surrender of their substance, that his unskillful and frantic schemes were the main pretext for the sufferings of the righteous under the Nazarene ; and again the same schemes bring on us the same oppression from the Moor. Accursed be he, and may his name perish !"

Ximen sighed, but remained silent, conjecturing to what end the Jew would bring his invectives. He was

not long in suspense. After a pause, Elias recommenced in an altered and more serious tone, "He is rich, this son of Issachar—wondrous rich."

"He has treasures scattered over half the cities of Africa and the Orient," said Ximen.

"Thou seest, then, my friend, that thy master hath doomed me to a heavy loss. I possess his secret; I could give him up to the king's wrath; I could bring him to the death. But I am just and meek; let him pay my forfeiture, and I will forego mine anger."

"Thou dost not know him," said Ximen, alarmed at the thought of a repayment which might grievously diminish his own heritage of Almamen's effects in Grenada.

"But if I threaten him with exposure?"

"Thou wouldst feed the fishes of the Darro," interrupted Ximen. "Nay, even now, if Almamen learn that thou knowst his birth and race, tremble! for thy days in the land will be numbered."

"Verily," exclaimed the Jew, in great alarm, "then have I fallen into the snare; for these lips revealed to him that knowledge."

"Then is the righteous Elias a lost man within ten days from that in which Almamen returns to Grenada. I know my master; he is a dread man, and blood is to him as water."

"Let the wicked be consumed!" cried Elias, furiously, stamping his foot while fire flashed from his dark eyes, for the instinct of self-preservation made him fierce. "Not from me, however," he added, more calmly, "will come his danger. Know that there be more than a hundred Jews in this city who have sworn his death; Jews who, flying hither from Cordova, have seen their parents murdered and their substance seized, and who behold in the son of Issachar the cause of the murder and the spoil. They have detected the impostor, and a hundred knives are whetting even now for his blood; let him look to it. Ximen, I have spoken to thee as the foolish speak; thou mayst betray me to thy lord; but, from what I have learned of thee from our brethren, I have poured my heart into thy bosom without fear. Wilt thou betray Israel, or assist us to smite the traitor?"

Ximen mused a moment, and his meditation conjured

up the treasures of his master. He stretched forth his right hand to Elias, and when the Israelites parted they were friends.

CHAPTER VI.

BOABDIL'S RETURN—THE REAPPEARANCE OF FERDINAND BEFORE GRENADA.

THE third morning from this interview a rumor reached Grenada that Boabdil had been repulsed in his assault on the citadel of Salobrena with a severe loss; that Hernando del Pulgar had succeeded in conducting to its relief a considerable force; and that the army of Ferdinand was on its march against the Moorish king. In the midst of the excitement occasioned by these reports, a courier arrived to confirm their truth, and to announce the return of Boabdil.

At nightfall the king, preceding his army, entered the city, and hastened to bury himself in the Alhambra. As he passed dejectedly into the women's apartments, his stern mother met him.

"My son," she said, bitterly, "dost thou return, and not a conqueror?"

Before Boabdil could reply, a light and rapid step sped through the glittering arcades; and weeping with joy, and breaking all the Oriental restraints, Amine fell upon his bosom. "My beloved! my king! light of my eyes! thou hast returned. Welcome, for thou art safe."

The different form of these several salutions struck Boabdil forcibly. "Thou seest, my mother," said he, "how great the contrast between those who love us from affection and those who love us from pride. In adversity, God keep me, O my mother, from thy tongue."

"But I love thee from pride too," murmured Amine; "and for that reason is thine adversity dear to me, for it takes thee from the world to make thee more mine own; and I am proud of the afflictions that my hero shares with his slave."

"Lights there and the banquet!" cried the king,

turning from his haughty mother ; " we will feast and be merry while we may. My adored Amine, kiss me ! "

Proud, melancholy, and sensitive as he was, in that hour of reverse Boabdil felt no grief ; such balm has love for our sorrows, when its wings are borrowed from the dove ! And although the laws of the Eastern life confined to the narrow walls of a harem the sphere of Amine's gentle influence ; although, even in romance, THE NATURAL compels us to portray her vivid and rich colors only in a faint and hasty sketch ; yet still are left to the outline the loveliest and the noblest features of the sex ; the spirit to arouse us to exertion, the softness to console us in our fall !

While Boabdil and the body of the army remained in the city, Muza, with a chosen detachment of the horse, scoured the country to visit the newly-acquired cities and sustain their courage.

From this charge he was recalled by the army of Ferdinand, which once more poured down into the Vega, completely devastated its harvests, and then swept back to consummate the conquests of the revolted towns. To this irruption succeeded an interval of peace—the calm before the storm. From every part of Spain, the most chivalric and resolute of the Moors, taking advantage of the pause in the contest, flocked to Grenada, and that city became the focus of all that paganism in Europe possessed of brave and determined spirits.

At length Ferdinand, completing his conquests and having refilled his treasury, mustered the whole force of his dominions, forty thousand foot and ten thousand horse ; and once more, and for the last time, appeared before the walls of Grenada. A solemn and prophetic determination filled both besiegers and besieged ; each felt that the crowning crisis was at hand.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONFLAGRATION—THE MAJESTY OF INDIVIDUAL PASSION IN THE MIDST OF HOSTILE THOUSANDS.

IT was the eve of a great and general assault upon Grenada, deliberately planned by the chiefs of the Christian army. The Spanish camp (the most gorgeous Christendom had ever known) gradually grew calm and hushed. The shades deepened, the stars burned forth more serene and clear. Bright in that azure air streamed the silken tents of the court, blazoned with heraldic devices, and crowned with gaudy banners, which, filled by a brisk and murmuring wind from the mountains, flaunted gayly on their gilded staves. In the center of the camp rose the pavilion of the queen; a palace in itself. Lances made its columns; brocade and painted arras its walls; and the space covered by its numerous compartments would have contained the halls and outworks of an ordinary castle. The pomp of that camp realized the wildest dreams of Gothic, coupled with Oriental, splendor; something worthy of a Tasso to have imagined or a Beckford to create. Nor was the exceeding costliness of the more courtly tents lessened in effect by those of the soldiery in the outskirts, many of which were built from boughs still retaining their leaves—savage and picturesque huts; as if, realizing old legends, wild men of the woods had taken up the cross, and followed the Christian warriors against the swarthy followers of Termagaunt and Mahound. There, then, extended that mighty camp in profound repose, as the midnight threw deeper and longer shadows over the sward from the tented avenues and canvas streets. It was at that hour that Isabel, in the most private recess of her pavilion, was employed in prayer for the safety of the king and the issue of the Sacred War. Kneeling before the altar of that warlike oratory, her spirit became rapt and absorbed from earth in the intensity of her devotions; and in the whole camp (save the sentries) the eyes of that pious queen were, perhaps, the only ones unclosed. All was profoundly still; her guards, her attendants, were gone to rest; and the tread of the sen-

tincl without that immense pavilion was not heard through the silken walls.

It was then that Isabel suddenly felt a strong grasp upon her shoulder as she still knelt by the altar. A faint shriek burst from her lips; she turned, and the broad curved knife of an Eastern warrior gleamed close before her eyes.

"Hush! utter a cry, breathe but more loudly than thy wont, and queen though thou art, in the center of swarming thousands, thou diest!"

Such were the words that reached the ear of the royal Castilian, whispered by a man of stern and commanding, though haggard aspect.

"What is thy purpose? wouldst thou murder me?" said the queen, trembling, perhaps for the first time, before a mortal presence.

"Fear not; thy life is safe if thou strivest not to elude or to deceive me. Our time is short—answer me. I am Almamen the Hebrew. Where is the hostage rendered to thy hands? I claim my child. She is with thee—I know it. In what corner of thy camp?"

"Rude stranger!" said Isabel, recovering somewhat from her alarm, "thy daughter is removed, I trust forever, from thine impious reach. She is not within the camp."

"Lie not, Queen of Castile," said Almamen, raising his knife; "for days and weeks I have tracked thy steps, followed thy march, haunted even thy slumbers, though men of mail stood as guards around them; and I know that my daughter has been with thee. Think not I brave this danger without resolves the most fierce and dread. Answer me! where is my child?"

"Many days since," said Isabel, awed, despite herself, by her strange position, "thy daughter left the camp for the house of God. It was her own desire. The Saviour hath received her into his fold."

Had a thousand lances pierced his heart, the vigor and energy of life could scarce more suddenly have deserted Almamen. The rigid muscles of his countenance relaxed at once from resolve and menace into unutterable horror, anguish and despair. He recoiled several steps; his knees trembled violently; he seemed stunned by a deathblow. Isabel, the boldest and haughtiest of her sex, seized that moment of reprieve; she sprung forward, darted

through the draperies into the apartments occupied by her train, and in a moment the pavilion resounded with her cries for aid. The sentinels were aroused; retainers sprang from their pillows; they heard the cause of the alarm; they made to the spot; when, ere they reached its partition of silk, a vivid and startling blaze burst forth upon them. The tent was on fire. The materials fed the flame like magic. Some of the guards had yet the courage to dash forward; but the smoke and the glare drove them back blinded and dizzy.

Isabel herself had scarcely time for escape, so rapid was the conflagration. Alarmed for her husband, she rushed to his tent, to find him already awakened by the noise, and issuing from its entrance, his drawn sword in his hand. The wind, which had a few minutes before but curled the triumphant banners, now circulated the destroying flame. It spread from tent to tent almost as a flash of lightning that shoots along close-neighboring clouds. The camp was in one blaze ere any man could even dream of checking the conflagration.

Not waiting to hear the confused tale of his royal consort, Ferdinand, exclaiming, "The Moors have done this; they will be on us!" ordered the drums to beat and the trumpets to sound, and hastened in person, wrapped merely in his long mantle, to alarm his chiefs. While that well-disciplined and veteran army, fearing every moment the rally of the foe, endeavored rapidly to form themselves into some kind of order, the flame continued to spread till the whole heavens presented an illumination, the intense and dazzling splendor of which even a Dante might be unable to describe. By its light cuirass and helmet glowed as in a furnace, and the armed men seemed rather like life-like and lurid meteors than human forms. The city of Grenada was brought near to them by the intensity of the glow; and as a detachment of cavalry spurred from the camp to meet the anticipated surprise of the Paynims, they saw, upon the walls and roofs of Grenada, the Moslems clustering and their spears gleaming. But, equally amazed with the Christians, and equally suspicious of craft and design, the Moors did not issue from their gates. Meanwhile the conflagration, as rapid to die as to begin, grew fitful and feeble; and the night seemed to fall with a melancholy darkness over the ruin of that silken city.

Ferdinand summoned his council. He had now perceived it was no ambush of the Moors. The account of Isabel, which at last he comprehended ; the strange and almost miraculous manner in which Almamen had baffled his guards and penetrated to the royal tent, might have aroused his Gothic superstition, while it relieved his more earthly apprehensions, if he had not remembered the singular but far from supernatural dexterity with which Eastern warriors, and even robbers, continued, then as now, to elude the most vigilant precautions and baffle the most wakeful guards ; and it was evident that the fire which burned the camp of an army had been kindled merely to gratify the revenge or favor the escape of an individual. Shaking, therefore, from his kingly spirit the thrill of superstitious awe that the greatness of the disaster, when associated with the name of a sorcerer, at first occasioned, he resolved to make advantage out of misfortune itself. The excitement, the wrath of the troops, produced the temper most fit for action.

"And God," said the King of Spain to his knights and chiefs as they assembled around him, "has, in this conflagration, announced to the warriors of the cross that henceforth their camp shall be the palaces of Grenada ! Woe to the Moslem with to-morrow's sun !"

Arms clanged and swords leaped from their sheaths as the Christian knights echoed the anathema—"WOE TO THE MOSLEM !"

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT BATTLE.

THE day slowly dawned upon that awful night ; and the Moors still upon the battlements of Grenada, beheld the whole army of Ferdinand on its march toward their

walls. At a distance lay the wrecks of the blackened and smoldering camp; while before them, gaudy and glittering pennants waving and trumpets sounding, came the exultant legions of the foe. The Moors could scarcely believe their senses. Fondly anticipating the retreat of the Christians after so signal a disaster, the gay and dazzling spectacle of their march to the assault filled them with consternation and alarm.

While yet wondering and inactive, the trumpet of Boabdil was heard behind; and they beheld the Moorish king, at the head of his guards, emerging down the avenues that led to the gate. The sight restored and exhilarated the gazers; and when Boabdil halted in the space before the portals, the shout of twenty thousand warriors rolled ominously to the ears of the advancing Christians.

"Men of Grenada!" said Boabdil, as soon as the deep and breathless silence had succeeded to that martial acclamation, "the advance of the enemy is to their destruction! In the fire of last night the hand of Allah wrote their doom. Let us forth, each and all! We will leave our homes unguarded; our hearts shall be their wall! True, that our numbers are thinned by famine and by slaughter, but enough of us are yet left for the redemption of Grenada. Nor are the dead departed from us; the dead fight with us, their souls animate our own! He who has lost a brother becomes twice a man. On this battle we will set all! Liberty or chains! empire or exile! victory or death! Forward!"

He spoke, and gave the rein to his barb. It bounded forward, and cleared the gloomy arch of the portals, and Boabdil el Chico was the first Moor who issued from Grenada to that last and eventful field. Out then poured, as a river that rushes from caverns into day, the burnished and serried files of the Moorish cavalry. Muza came the last, closing the array. Upon his dark and stern countenance there spoke not the ardent enthusiasm of the sanguine king. It was locked and rigid; and the anxieties of the last dismal weeks had thinned his cheeks and plowed deep lines around the firm lips and iron jaw which bespoke the obstinate and unconquerable resolution of his character.

As Muza now spurred forward, and, riding along the wheeling ranks, marshalled them in order, arose the ac-

clamination of female voices; and the warriors, who looked back at the sound, saw that their women, their wives and daughters, their mothers and their beloved (released from their seclusion by a policy which bespoke the desperation of the cause), were gazing at them with outstretched arms from the battlements and towers. The Moors felt that they were now to fight for their hearths and altars in the presence of those who, if they failed, became slaves and harlots; and each Moslem felt his heart harden like the steel of his own saber.

While the cavalry formed themselves into regular squadrons, and the tramp of the foemen came more near and near, the Moorish infantry, in miscellaneous, eager, and undisciplined bands, poured out, until, spreading wide and deep below the walls, Boabdil's charger was seen rapidly careering among them, as, in short but distinct directions or fiery adjuration, he sought at once to regulate their movements, and confirm their hot but capricious valor.

Meanwhile the Christians had abruptly halted; and the politic Ferdinand resolved not to incur the full brunt of a whole population in the first flush of their enthusiasm and despair. He summoned to his side Hernando del Pulgar, and bade him with a troop of the most adventurous and practiced horsemen, advance toward the Moorish cavalry, and endeavor to draw the fiery valor of Muza away from the main army. Then, splitting up his force into several sections, he dismissed each to different stations; some to storm the adjacent towers, others to fire the surrounding gardens and orchards; so that the action might consist rather of many battles than of one, and the Moors might lose the concentration and union which made at present their most formidable strength.

Thus, while the Mussulmans were waiting in order for the attack, they suddenly beheld the main body of Christians dispersing; and, while yet in surprise and perplexed, they saw the fires breaking out from their delicious gardens to the right and left of the walls, and heard the boom of the Christian artillery against the scattered bulwarks that guarded the approaches of that city.

At that moment a cloud of dust rolled rapidly toward the post occupied in the van by Muza, and the

shock of the Christian knights, in their mighty mail, broke upon the center of the prince's squadron.

Higher by several inches than the plumage of his companions, waved the crest of the gigantic Del Pulgar; and as Moor after Moor went down before his headlong lance, his voice, sounding deep and sepulchral through his visor, shouted out, "Death to the infidel!"

The rapid and dexterous horsemen of Grenada were not, however, discomfited by this fierce assault; opening their ranks with extraordinary celerity, they suffered the charge to pass, comparatively harmless, through their center; and then, closing in one long and bristling line, cut off the knights from retreat. The Christians wheeled round and charged again upon their foe.

"Where art thou, O Moslem dog! that wouldst play the lion? Where art thou, Muza Ben Abil Gazan?"

"Before thee, Christian!" cried a stern and clear voice; and from among the helmets of his people gleamed the dazzling turban of the Moor.

Hernando checked his steed, gazed a moment at his foe, turned back for greater impetus to his charge, and, in a moment more, the bravest warriors of the two armies met lance to lance.

The round shield of Muza received the Christian's weapon; his own spear shivered harmless upon the breast of the giant. He drew his sword, whirled it rapidly over his head, and for some minutes the eyes of the bystanders could scarcely mark the marvelous rapidity with which strokes were given and parried by those redoubted swordsmen.

At length Hernando, anxious to bring to bear his superior strength, spurred close to Muza; and, leaving his sword pendent by a thong to his wrist, seized the shield of Muza in his formidable grasp, and plucked it away with a force that the Moor vainly endeavored to resist; Muza, therefore, suddenly released his hold; and, ere the Spaniard recovered his balance (which was lost by the success of his own strength, put forth to the utmost), he dashed upon him the hoofs of his black charger, and, with a short but heavy mace which he caught up from the saddle-bow, dealt Hernando so thundering a blow upon the helmet that the giant fell to the ground stunned and senseless.

To dismount, to repossess himself of his shield, to resume his saber, to put one knee to the breast of his fal-

len foe, was the work of a moment ; and then had Don Hernando del Pulgar been sped, without priest or surgeon, but that, alarmed by the peril of their most valiant comrade, twenty knights spurred at once to the rescue, and the points of twenty lances kept the Lion of Grenada from his prey. Thither with similar speed rushed the Moorish champions ; and the fight became close and deadly round the body of the still unconscious Christian. Not an instant of leisure to unlace the helmet of Hernando, by removing which alone the Moorish blade could find a mortal place, was permitted to Muza ; and, what with the spears and trampling hoofs around him, the situation of the Paynim was more dangerous than that of the Christian. Meanwhile Hernando recovered his dizzy senses ; and, made aware of his state, watched his occasion, and suddenly shook off the knee of the Moor. With another effort he was on his feet ; and the two champions stood confronting each other, neither very eager to renew the combat. But on foot, Muza, daring and rash as he was, could not but recognize his disadvantage against the enormous strength and impenetrable armor of the Christian ; he drew back, whistled to his barb, that, piercing the ranks of the horsemen, was by his side on the instant, remounted, and was in the midst of the foe almost ere the slower Spaniard was conscious of his disappearance.

But Hernando was not delivered from his enemy. Clearing a space around him as three knights, mortally wounded, fell beneath his saber, Muza now drew from behind his shoulder his short Arabian bow ; and shaft after shaft came rattling upon the mail of the dismounted Christian with so marvelous a celerity, that, encumbered as he was with his heavy accoutrements, he was unable either to escape from the spot or ward off that arrowy rain ; and felt that nothing but chance or our Lady could prevent the death which one such arrow would occasion if it should find the opening of the visor or the joints of the hauberk.

"Mother of mercy !" groaned the knight, perplexed and enraged, "let not thy servant be shot down like a hart by this cowardly warfare ; but if I must fall, be it with mine enemy grappling hand to hand."

While yet muttering this short invocation, the war-cry of Spain was heard hard by, and the gallant company of Villena was seen scouring across the plain to the

succor of their comrades. The deadly attention of Muza was distracted from individual foes, however eminent ; he wheeled round, re-collected his men, and, in a serried charge, met the new enemy in midway.

While the contest thus fared in that part of the field, the scheme of Ferdinand had succeeded so far as to break up the battle into detached sections. Far and near, plain, grove, garden, tower, presented each the scene of obstinate and determined conflict. Boabdil, at the head of his chosen guard, the flower of the haughtier tribe of nobles, who were jealous of the fame and blood of the tribe of Muza, and followed also by his gigantic Ethiopians, exposed his person to every peril, with the desperate valor of a man who feels his own stake is greatest in the field. As he most distrusted the infantry, so among the infantry he chiefly bestowed his presence ; and, wherever he appeared, he sufficed for a moment to turn the chances of the engagement. At length, at mid-day, Ponce de Leon led against the largest detachment of the Moorish foot a strong and numerous battalion of the best-disciplined and veteran soldiery of Spain. He had succeeded in winning a fortress from which his artillery could play with effect ; and the troops he led were composed partly of men flushed with recent triumph, and partly of a fresh reserve now first brought into the field. A comely and a breathless spectacle it was to behold this Christian squadron emerging from a blazing copse which they fired on their march ; the red light gleaming on their complete armor as, in steady and solemn order, they swept on to the swaying and clamorous ranks of the Moorish infantry. Boabdil learned the danger from his scouts ; and hastily leaving a tower from which he had for awhile repulsed a hostile legion, he threw himself into the midst of the battalions menaced by the skillful Ponce de Leon. Almost at the same moment the wild and eminous apparition of Almamen, long absent from the eyes of the Moors, appeared in the same quarter so suddenly and unexpectedly that none knew whence he had emerged ; the sacred standard in his left hand ; his saber, bared and dripping gore, in his right ; his face exposed, and his powerful features working with an excitement that seemed inspired, his abrupt presence breathed a new soul into the Moors.

"They come ! they come !" he shrieked aloud. "The

God of the East had delivered the Goth into your hands !”

From rank to rank, from line to line, sped the santón ; and as the mystic banner gleamed before the soldiery, each closed his eyes and muttered an amen to his adjurations.

And now, to the cry of Spain and St. Iago, came trampling down the relentless charge of the Christian war. At the same instant, from the fortress lately taken by Ponce de Leon, the artillery opened upon the Moors, and did deadly havoc. The Moslems wavered a moment, when before them gleamed the white banner of Almamén, and they beheld him rushing alone and on foot amidst the foe. Taught to believe the war itself depended on the preservation of the enchanted banner, the Paynims could not see it thus rashly adventured without anxiety and shame ; they rallied, advanced firmly, and Boabdil himself, with waving scimeter and fierce exclamations, dashed impetuously at the head of his guards and Ethiopians into the affray. The battle became obstinate and bloody. Thrice the white banner disappeared amidst the closing ranks ; and thrice, like a moon from the clouds, it shone forth again, the light and guide of the pagan power.

The day ripened, and the hills already cast lengthening shadows over the blazing groves and the still Darro, whose waters in every creek where the tide was arrested, ran red with blood, when Ferdinand, collecting his whole reserve, descended from the eminence on which hitherto he had posted himself. With him moved three thousand foot and a thousand horse, fresh in their vigor and panting for a share in that glorious day. The king himself, who, though constitutionally fearless, from motives of policy rarely periled his person save on imminent occasions, was resolved not to be outdone by Boabdil ; and, armed *cap-a-pie* in mail, so wrought with gold that it seemed nearly all of that costly metal, with his snow-white plumage waving above a small diadem that surmounted his lofty helm, he seemed a fit leader to that armament of heroes. Behind him flaunted the great gonfalon of Spain, and trump and cymbal heralded his approach. The Count de Tendilla rode by his side.

“ Senor,” said Ferdinand, “ the infidels fight hard ;

but they are in the snare ; we are about to close the nets upon them. But what cavalcade is this ?”

The group that thus drew the king’s attention consisted of six squires, bearing on a martial litter, composed of shields, the stalwart form of Hernando del Pulgar.

“Ah, the dogs !” cried the king, as he recognized the pale features of the darling of the army ; “have they murdered the bravest knight that ever fought for Christendom ?”

“Not that, your majesty,” quoth he of the exploits, faintly, “but I am sorely stricken.”

“It must have been more than man who struck thee down,” said the king.

“It was the mace of Muza Ben Abil Gazan, an please you, sire,” said one of the squires ; “but it came on the good knight unawares, and long after his own arm had seemingly driven away the pagan.”

“We will avenge thee well,” said the king, setting his teeth : “let our own leeches tend thy wounds. Forward, sir knights ! St. Iago and Spain !”

The battle had now gathered to a vortex ; Muza and his cavalry had joined Boabdil and the Moorish foot. On the other hand, Villena had been re-enforced by detachments that, in almost every quarter of the field, had routed the foe. The Moors had been driven back, though inch by inch ; they were now in the broad space before the very walls of the city which were still crowded with the pale and anxious faces of the aged and the women, and at every pause in the artillery the voices that spoke of HOME were borne by that lurid air to the ears of the infidels. The shout that ran through the Christian force, as Ferdinand now joined it, struck like a death-knell upon the last hope of Boabdil. But the blood of his fierce ancestry burned in his veins, and the cheering voice of Almamen, whom nothing daunted, inspired him with a kind of superstitious frenzy.

“King against king—so be it ! let Allah decide between us,” cried the Moorish monarch. “Bind up this wound—’tis well ! A steed for the santón ! Now, my prophet and my friend, mount by the side of thy king—let us, at least, fall together. Lelilies ! lelilies !”

Throughout the brave Christian ranks went a thrill of reluctant admiration as they beheld the Paynim king, conspicuous by his fair beard and the jewels of his har-

ness, lead the scanty guard yet left to him once more into the thickest of their lines. Simultaneously Muza and his zegrís made their fiery charge ; and the Moorish infantry, excited by the example of their leaders, followed with unslackened and dogged zeal. The Christians gave way—they were beaten back : Ferdinand spurred forward, and, ere either party were well aware of it, both kings met in the same *melee* ; all order and discipline for the moment lost, general and monarch were, as common soldiers, fighting hand to hand.

It was then that Ferdinand, after bearing down before his lance Naim Reduon, second only to Muza in the songs of Grenada, beheld opposed to him a strange form, that seemed to that royal Christian rather fiend than man: his raven hair and beard, clotted with blood, hung like snakes about a countenance whose features, naturally formed to give expression to the darkest passions, were distorted with the madness of despairing rage. Wounded in many places, the blood dabbled his mail ; while over his head he waved the banner wrought with mystic characters, which Ferdinand had already been taught to believe the workmanship of demons.

"Now, perjured king of the Nazarenes !" shouted this formidable champion, "we meet at last !—no longer host and guest, monarch and dervish, but man to man ! I am Almamen ! Die !"

He spoke, and his sword descended so fiercely on that anointed head, that Ferdinand bent to his saddle-bow. But the king quickly recovered his seat and gallantly met the encounter ; it was one that might have tasked to the utmost the prowess of his bravest knight. Passions, which, in their number, their nature, and their excess, animated no other champion on either side, gave to the arm of Almamen the Israelite a preternatural strength ; his blows fell like rain upon the harness of the king ; and the fiery eyes, the gleaming banner of the mysterious sorcerer who had eluded the tortures of his Inquisition ; who had walked unscathed through the midst of his army ; whose sing'e hand had consumed the encampment of a host, filled the stout heart of the king with a belief that he encountered no earthly foe. Fortunately, perhaps, for Ferdinand and Spain, the contest did not last long. Twenty horsemen spurred into the *melee* to the rescue of the plumed diadem ; Tendilla arrived the first ;

with a stroke of his two-handed sword the white banner was cleft from its staff and fell to the earth. At that sight the Moors around broke forth in a wild and despairing cry: that cry spread from rank to rank, from horse to foot: the Moorish infantry, sorely pressed on all sides, no sooner learned the disaster than they turned to fly: the rout was as fatal as it was sudden. The Christian reserve, just brought into the field, poured down upon them with a simultaneous charge. Boabdil, too much engaged to be the first to learn the downfall of the sacred insignia, suddenly saw himself almost alone, with his diminished Ethiopians and a handful of his cavaliers.

"Yield thee, Boabdil el Chico!" cried Tendilla, from his rear, "or thou canst not be saved."

"By the Prophet, never!" exclaimed the king; and he dashed his barb against the wall of spears behind him; and, with but a score or so of his guard, cut his way through the ranks that were not unwilling, perhaps, to spare so brave a foe. As he cleared the Spanish battalions, the unfortunate monarch checked his horse for a moment and gazed along the plain: he beheld his army flying in all directions, save in that single spot where yet glittered the turban of Muza Ben Abil Gazan. As he gazed, he heard the panting nostrils of the chargers behind, and saw the leveled spears of a company dispatched to take him, alive or dead, by the command of Ferdinand; he laid the reins upon his horse's neck and galloped into the city; three lances quivered against the portals as he disappeared through the shadows of the arch. But, while Muza remained, all was not yet lost; he perceived the flight of the infantry and the king, and with his followers galloped across the plain; he came in time to encounter and slay, to a man, the pursuers of Boabdil; he then threw himself before the flying Moors.

"Do ye fly in the sight of your wives and daughters? would ye not rather they beheld ye die?"

A thousand voices answered him. "The banner is in the hands of the infidel—all is lost!" They swept by him, and stopped not till they gained the gates.

"Accursed be these spells!" cried Muza. "Were our country our only charm, *that* never would have been lost!"

But still a small and devoted remnant of the Moorish

cavaliers remained to shed a last glory over defeat itself. With Muza, their soul and center, they fought every atom of ground ; it was, as the chronicler expresses it, as if they grasped the soil with their arms. Twice they charged into the midst of the foe ; the slaughter they made doubled their own number ; but, gathering on and closing in, squadron upon squadron, came the whole Christian army ; they were encompassed, wearied out, beaten back as by an ocean. Like wild beasts driven, at length, to their lair, they retreated with their faces to the foe ; and when Muza came, the last, his scimeter shivered to the hilt, he had scarcely breath to command the gates to be closed and the portcullis lowered, ere he fell from his charger in a sudden and deadly swoon, caused less by his exhaustion than his agony and shame. So ended the last battle fought for the monarchy of Grenada !

CHAPTER II.

THE NOVICE.

It was in one of the cells of a convent renowned for the piety of its inmates and the wholesome austerity of its laws that a young novice sat alone. The narrow casement was placed so high in the cold gray wall as to forbid to the tenant of the cell the solace of sad or the distraction of pious thoughts, which a view of the world without might afford. Lovely indeed was the landscape that spread below ; but it was barred from those youthful and melancholy eyes ; for Nature might tempt to a thousand thoughts not of a tenor calculated to reconcile the heart to an internal sacrifice of the sweet human ties. But a faint and partial gleam of sunshine broke through the aperture, and made yet more cheerless the dreary aspect and gloomy appurtenances of the cell. And the young novice seemed to carry on within herself that struggle of emotions without which there is no victory in the resolves of virtue ; sometimes she wept bitterly, but with a low, subdued sorrow, which spoke

rather of despondency than passion; sometimes she raised her head from her breast, and smiled as she looked upward, or as her eyes rested on the crucifix and the death's-head that were placed on the rude table by the pallet on which she sat. They were emblems of death here and life hereafter, which, perhaps, afforded to her the sources of a twofold consolation.

She was yet musing when a slight tap at the door was heard, and the abbess of the convent appeared.

"Daughter," said she, "I have brought thee the comfort of a sacred visitor. The Queen of Spain, whose pious tenderness is materially anxious for thy full contentment with thy lot, has sent hither a holy friar, whom she deems more soothing in his counsels than our brother Tomas, whose ardent zeal often terrifies those whom his honest spirit only desires to purify and guide. I will leave him with thee. May the saints bless his ministry!" So saying, the abbess retired from the threshold, making way for a form in the garb of a monk, with the hood drawn over the face. The monk bowed his head meekly, advanced into the cell, closed the door, and seated himself on a stool, which, save the table and the pallet, seemed the sole furniture of the dismal chamber.

"Daughter," said he, after a pause, "it is a rugged and a mournful lot, this renunciation of earth and all its fair destinies and soft affections, to one not wholly prepared and armed for the sacrifice. Confide in me, my child; I am no dire inquisitor, seeking to distort the words to thine own peril. I am no bitter and morose ascetic. Beneath these robes still beats a human heart that can sympathize with human sorrows. Confide in me without fear. Dost thou not dread the fate they would force upon thee? Dost thou not shrink back? Wouldst thou not be free?"

"No," said the poor novice; but the denial came faint and irresolute from her lips.

"Pause," said the friar, growing more earnest in his tone; "pause, there is yet time."

"Nay," said the novice, looking up with some surprise in her countenance, "nay, even were I so weak, escape now is impossible. What hand could unbar the gates of the convent?"

"Mine!" cried the monk, with impetuosity. "Yes, I

have that power. In all Spain but one man can save thee, and I am he."

"You!" faltered the novice, gazing at her strange visitor with mingled astonishment and alarm. "And who are you, that could resist the fiat of that Tomas de Torquemada, before whom, they tell me, even the crowned heads of Castile and Arragon veil low?"

The monk half rose, with an impatient and almost haughty start at this interrogatory; but, reseating himself, replied, in a deep and half-whispered voice, "Daughter, listen to me! It is true that Isabel of Spain (whom the Mother of Mercy bless! for merciful to all is her secret heart, if not her outward policy), it is true that Isabel of Spain, fearful that the path to heaven might be made rougher to thy feet than it well need be" (there was a slight accent of irony in the monk's voice as he thus spoke), "selected a friar of suasive eloquence and gentle manners to visit thee. He was charged with letters to yon abbess from the queen. Soft though the friar, he was yet a hypocrite. Nay, hear me out! he loved to worship the rising sun; and he did not wish always to remain a simple friar while the Church had higher dignities of this earth to bestow. In the Christian camp, daughter, there was one who burned for tidings of thee; whom thine image haunted; who, stern as thou wert to him, loved thee with a love he knew not of till thou wert lost to him. Why dost thou tremble, daughter? listen yet! to that lover, for he was one of high rank, came the monk; to that lover the monk sold his mission. The monk will have a ready tale, that he was waylaid amidst the mountains by armed men, and robbed of his letters to the abbess. The lover took his garb, and he took the letters and hastened hither. Leila! beloved Leila! behold him at thy feet!"

The monk raised his cowl; and, dropping on his knees beside her, presented to her gaze the features of the Prince of Spain.

"You!" said Leila, averting her countenance, and vainly endeavoring to extricate the hand which he had seized. "This is, indeed, cruel. You, the author of so many sufferings, such calumny, such reproach!"

"I will repair all," said Don Juan, fervently. "I alone, I repeat it, have the power to set you free. You are no longer a Jewess; you are one of our faith; there

is now no bar upon our loves. Imperious though my father, all dark and dread as is this new POWER which he is rashly erecting in his dominions, the heir of two monarchies is not so poor in influence and in friends as to be unable to offer the woman of his love an inviolable shelter, alike from priest and despot. Fly with me! leave this dreary sepulcher ere the last stone close over thee forever! I have horses, I have guards at hand. This night it can be arranged. This night—oh, bliss! thou mayst be rendered up to earth and love!”

“Prince,” said Leila, who had drawn herself from Juan’s grasp during this address, and who now stood at a little distance, erect and proud, “you tempt me in vain; or, rather, you offer me no temptation. I have made my choice; I abide by it.”

“Oh! bethink thee,” said the prince, in a voice of real and imploring anguish; “bethink thee well of the consequences of thy refusal. Thou canst not see them yet; thine ardor blinds thee. But, when hour after hour, day after day, year after year steals on in the appalling monotony of this sanctified prison; when thou shalt see thy youth withering without love, thine age without honor; when thy heart shall grow as stone within thee beneath the looks of yon icy specters; when nothing shall vary thy aching dullness of wasted life save a longer fast or a severer penance; then, then will thy grief be rendered tenfold by the despairing and remorseful thought that thine own lips sealed thine own sentence. Thou mayst think,” continued Juan, with rapid eagerness, “that my love to thee was at first light and dishonoring. Be it so. I own that my youth has passed in idle wooings and the mockeries of affection. But, for the first time in my life, I feel that *I love*. Thy dark eyes, thy noble beauty, even thy womanly scorn, have fascinated me. I, never yet disdained where I have been a suitor, acknowledge at last that there is a triumph in the conquest of a woman’s heart. Oh, Leila! do not, do not reject me. You know not how rare and how deep a love you cast away.”

The novice was touched: the present language of Don Juan was so different from what it had been before; the earnest love that breathed in his voice, that looked from his eyes, struck a chord in her breast; it reminded her of her own unconquered, unconquerable love for the

lost Muza ; for there is that in a woman, that, when she loves one, the honest wooing of another she may reject, but cannot disdain ; she feels, by her own heart, the agony his must endure ; and, by a kind of egotism, pities the mirror of herself. She was touched, then touched to tears ; but her resolves were not shaken.

"Oh, Leila !" resumed the prince, fondly mistaking the nature of her emotion and seeking to pursue the advantage he imagined he had gained ; "look at yonder sunbeam struggling through the loop hole of thy cell. Is it not a messenger from the happy world ? does it not plead for me ? does it not whisper to thee of the green fields, and the laughing vineyards, and all the beautiful prodigality of that earth thou art about to renounce forever ? Dost thou dread my love ? Are the forms around thee, ascetic and lifeless, fairer to thine eyes than mine ? Dost thou doubt my power to protect thee ? I tell thee that the proudest nobles of Spain would flock around my banner were it necessary to guard thee by force of arms. Yet, speak the word—be mine—and I will fly hence with thee to climes where the Church has not cast out its deadly roots, and, forgetful of crowns and cares, live alone for thee. Ah, speak !"

"My lord," said Leila, calmly, and rousing herself to the necessary effort, "I am deeply and sincerely grateful for the interest you express, for the affection you avow. But you deceive yourself. I have pondered well over the alternative I have taken. I do not regret nor repent, much less would I retract it. The earth that you speak of, full of affections and of bliss to others, has no ties, no allurements for me. I desire only peace, repose, and an early death."

"Can it be possible," said the prince, growing pale, "that thou lovest another ? Then, indeed, and then only, would my wooing be in vain."

The cheek of the novice grew deeply flushed, but the color soon subsided ; she murmured to herself, "Why should I blush to own it now ?" and then spoke aloud : "Prince, I trust I have done with the world ; and bitter the pang I feel when you call me back to it. But you merit my candor : I *have* loved another ; and in that thought, as in an urn, lie the ashes of all affection. That other is of a different faith. We may never, never meet again below, but it is a solace to pray that we may meet

above. That solace and these cloisters are dearer to me than all the pomp, all the pleasures of the world."

The prince sunk down, and, covering his face with his hands, groaned aloud, but made no reply.

"Go, then, Prince of Spain," continued the novice; "son of the noble Isabel, Leila is not unworthy of her cares. Go and pursue the great destinies that await you. And if you forgive, if you still cherish a thought of the poor Jewish maiden, soften, alleviate, mitigate the wretched and desperate doom that awaits the fallen race she has abandoned for thy creed."

"Alas, alas!" said the prince, mournfully, "thee alone, perchance, of all thy race, I could have saved from the bigotry that is fast covering this knightly land like the rising of an irresistible sea, and thou rejectest me! Take time, at least, to pause, to consider. Let me see thee again to-morrow."

"No, prince, no—not again! I will keep thy secret only if I see thee no more. If thou persist in a suit that I feel to be that of sin and shame, then, indeed, mine honor——"

"Hold" interrupted Juan, with haughty impatience; "I torment, I harass you no more. I release you from my importunity. Perhaps already I have stooped too low." He drew the cowl over his features, and strode sullenly to the door; but, turning for one last gaze on the form that had so strangely fascinated a heart capable of generous emotions, the meek and despondent posture of the novice, her tender youth, her gloomy fate, melted his momentary pride and resentment. "God bless and reconcile thee, poor child!" he said, in a voice choked with contending passions, and the door closed upon his form.

"I thank thee, Heaven, that it was not Muza!" muttered Leila, breaking from a reverie in which she seemed to be communing with her own soul; "I feel that I could not have resisted *him*." With that thought she knelt down in humble and penitent self-reproach, and prayed for strength.

Ere she had risen from her supplications, her solitude was again invaded by Torquemada, the Dominican.

This strange man, though the author of cruelties at which nature recoils, had some veins of warm and gentle feeling streaking, as it were, the marble of his hard

character ; and when he had thoroughly convinced himself of the pure and earnest zeal of the young convert, he relaxed from the grim sternness he had at first exhibited toward her. He loved to exert the eloquence he possessed in raising her spirit, in reconciling her doubts. He prayed *for* her, and he prayed *beside* her, with passion and with tears.

He staid long with the novice ; and, when he left her, she was, if not happy, at least contented. Her warmest wish now was to abridge the period of her novitiate, which, at her desire, the Church had already rendered merely a nominal probation. She longed to put irresolution out of her power, and to enter at once upon the narrow road through the strait gate.

The gentle and modest piety of the young novice touched the sisterhood : she was endeared to all of them. Her conversion was an event that broke the lethargy of their stagnant life. She became an object of general interest, of avowed pride, of kindly compassion : and their kindness to her, who from her cradle had seen little of her own sex, had a great effect toward calming and soothing her mind. But at night, her dreams brought before her the dark and menacing countenance of her father. Sometimes he seemed to pluck her from the gates of heaven, and to sink with her into the yawning abyss below. Sometimes she saw him with her beside the altar, but imploring her to forswear the Saviour, before whose crucifix she knelt. Occasionally her visions were haunted also with Muza, but in less terrible guise. She saw his calm and melancholy eyes fixed upon her, and his voice asked, "Canst thou take a vow that makes it sinful to remember me?"

The night, that usually brings balm and oblivion to the sad, was thus made more dreadful to Leila than the day. Her health grew feebler and feebler, but her mind still was firm. In happier time and circumstance that poor novice would have been a great character ; but she was one of the countless victims the world knows not of, whose virtues are in silent motives, whose struggles are in the solitary heart.

Of the prince she heard and saw no more. There were times when she fancied, from oblique and obscure hints, that the Dominican had been aware of Don Juan's disguise and visit. But, if so, that knowledge appeared

only to increase the gentleness, almost the respect, which Torquemada manifested toward her. Certainly, since that day, from some cause or other, the priest's manner had been softened when he addressed her; and he who seldom had recourse to other arts than those of censure and of menace, often uttered sentiments half of pity and half of praise.

Thus consoled and supported in the day, thus haunted and terrified by night, but still not repenting her resolve, Leila saw the time glide on to that eventful day when her lips were to pronounce that irrevocable vow which is the epitaph of life. While in this obscure and remote convent progressed the history of an individual, we are summoned back to behold the crowning fate of an expiring dynasty.

CHAPTER III.

THE PAUSE BETWEEN DEFEAT AND SURRENDER.

THE unfortunate Boabdil plunged once more amidst the recesses of the Alhambra. Whatever his anguish or his despondency, none were permitted to share, or even to behold, his emotions. But he especially resisted the admission to his solitude, demanded by his mother, implored by his faithful Amine, and sorrowfully urged by Muza; those most loved and respected were, above all, the persons from whom he most shrunk.

Almamen was heard of no more. It was believed that he had perished in the battle. But he was one of those who, precisely as they are effective when present, are forgotten in absence. And, in the meanwhile, as the Vega was utterly desolated, and all supplies were cut off, famine, daily made more terrifically severe, diverted the attention of each humbler Moor from the fall of the city to his individual sufferings.

New persecutions fell upon the miserable Jews. Not having taken any share in the conflict (as was to be expected from men who had no stake in the country which they dwelt in, and whose brethren had been taught so severe a lesson upon the folly of interference), no senti-

ment of fellowship in danger mitigated the hatred and loathing with which they were held ; and as, in their lust of gain, many of them continued, amidst the agony and starvation of the citizens, to sell food at enormous prices, the excitement of the multitude against them—released, by the state of the city, from all restraint and law—made itself felt by the most barbarous excesses. Many of the houses of the Israelites were attacked by the mob, plundered, razed to the ground, and the owners tortured to death to extort confession of imaginary wealth. Not to sell what was demanded was a crime ; to sell it was a crime also. These miserable outcasts fled to whatever secret places the vaults of their houses or the caverns in the hills within the city could yet afford them, cursing their fate, and almost longing even for the yoke of the Christian bigots.

Thus passed several days—the defense of the city abandoned to its naked walls and mighty gates. The glaring sun looked down upon closed shops and depopulated streets, save when some ghostly and skeleton band of the famished poor collected, in a sudden paroxysm of revenge or despair, around the stormed and fired mansion of a detested Israelite.

At length Boabdil aroused himself from his seclusion, and Muza, to his own surprise, was summoned to the presence of the king. He found Boabdil in one of the most gorgeous halls of his gorgeous palace.

Within the Tower of Comares is a vast chamber, still called the Hall of the Ambassadors. Here it was that Boabdil now held his court. On the glowing walls hung trophies and banners, and here and there an Arabian portrait of some bearded king. By the windows, which overlooked the most lovely banks of the Darro, gathered the santons and alfaquis, a little apart from the main crowd. Beyond, though half-veiling draperies, might be seen the great court of the Alberca, whose peristyles were hung with flowers ; while, in the center, the gigantic basin which gives its name to the court caught the sunlight obliquely, and its waves glittered on the eye from amidst the roses that then clustered over it.

In the audience-hall itself, a canopy, over the royal cushions on which Boabdil reclined, was blazoned with the heraldic insignia of Grenada's monarchs. His guards,

and his mutes, and his eunuchs, and his courtiers, and his counselors, and his captains, were ranged in long files on either side the canopy. It seemed the last flicker of the lamp of Moorish empire, that hollow and unreal pomp ! As Muza approached the monarch, he was startled by the change of his countenance : the young and beautiful Boabdil seemed to have grown suddenly old ; his eyes were sunken, his countenance sown with wrinkles, and his voice sounded broken and hollow on the ears of his kinsman.

"Come hither, Muza," said he ; "seat thyself beside me, and listen as thou best canst to the tidings we are about to hear."

As Muza placed himself on a cushion a little below the king, Boabdil motioned to one among the crowd.

"Hamet," said he, "thou hast examined the state of the Christian camp : what news dost thou bring ?"

"Light of the Faithful," answered the Moor, "it is a camp no longer ; it has already become a city. Nine towns of Spain were charged with the task, stone has taken the place of canvas ; towers and streets arise like the buildings of a genius ; and the misbelieving king hath sworn that this new city shall not be left until Grenada sees his standard on its walls."

"Go on," said Boabdil, calmly.

"Traders and men of merchandise flock thither daily ; the spot is one bazar ; all that should supply our famishing country pours its plenty into their mart."

Boabdil motioned to the Moor to withdraw, and an alfaqui advanced in his stead.

"Successor of the Prophet and darling of the world !" said the reverend man. "the alfaquis and seers of Grenada implore thee on their knees to listen to their voice. They have consulted the Books of Fate ; they have implored a sign from the Prophet ; and they find that the glory has left thy people and thy crown. The fall of Grenada is predestined—God is great !"

"You shall have my answer forthwith," said Boabdil. "Abdelemic, approach."

From the crowd came an aged and white-bearded man, the governor of the city.

"Speak, old man," said the king.

"Oh, Boabdil !" said the veteran, with faltering tones, while the tears rolled down his cheeks ; "son of

a race of kings and heroes ! would that thy servant had fallen dead on thy threshold this day, and that the lips of a Moorish noble had never been polluted by the words that I now utter. Our state is hopeless ; our granaries are as the sands of the deserts ; there is in them life neither for beast or man. The war-horse that bore the hero is now consumed for his food ; and the population of thy city, with one voice, cry for chains and—bread ! I have spoken."

"Admit the ambassador of Egypt," said Boabdil, as Abdelemic retired. There was a pause ; one of the draperies at the end of the hall was drawn aside, and with the slow and sedate majesty of their tribe and land paced forth a dark and swarthy train, the envoys of the Egyptian soldan. Six of the band bore costly presents of gems and weapons, and the procession closed with four veiled slaves, whose beauty had been the boast of the ancient valley of the Nile.

"Sun of Grenada and day-star of the faithful !" said the chief of the Egyptians, "my lord, the Soldan of Egypt, delight of the world, and rose-tree of the East, thus answers to the letters of Boabdil. He grieves that he cannot send the succor thou demandest, and, informing himself of the condition of thy territories, he finds that Grenada no longer holds a sea-port by which his forces (could he send them) might find an entrance into Spain. He implores thee to put thy trust in Allah, who will not desert his chosen ones, and lays these gifts, in pledge of amity and love, at the feet of my lord the king."

"It is a gracious and well-timed offering," said Boabdil, with a writhing lip ; "we thank him." There was now a long and dead silence as the ambassadors swept from the hall of audience, when Boabdil suddenly raised his head from his breast, and looked around his hall with a kingly and majestic look : "Let the heralds of Ferdinand of Spain approach."

A groan involuntary broke from the breast of Muza ; it was echoed by a murmur of abhorrence and despair from the gallant captains who stood around ; but to that momentary burst succeeded a breathless silence, as, from another drapery opposite the royal couch, gleamed the burnished mail of the knights of Spain. Foremost of those haughty visitors, whose iron heels clanked loudly

on the tessellated floor, came a noble and stately form, in full armor, save the helmet, and with a mantle of azure velvet, wrought with the silver cross that made the badge of the Christian war. Upon his manly countenance was visible no sign of undue arrogance or exultation, but something of that generous pity which brave men feel for conquered foes dimmed the luster of his commanding eye and softened the wonted sternness of his martial bearing. He and his train approached the king with a profound salutation of respect, and, falling back, motioned to the herald that accompanied him, and whose garb, breast and back, was wrought with the arms of Spain, to deliver himself of his mission.

"To Boabdil!" said the herald, with a loud voice, that filled the whole expanse, and thrilled with various emotions the dumb assembly. "To Boabdil el Chico, King of Grenada, Ferdinand of Arragon and Isabel of Castile send royal greeting. They command me to express their hope that the war is at length concluded; and they offer to the King of Grenada such terms of capitulation as a king without dishonor may receive. In the stead of this city, which their most Christian majesties will restore to their own dominion, as is just, they offer, O King, princely territories in the Alpuxarras mountains to your sway, holding them by oath of fealty to the Spanish crown. To the people of Grenada their most Christian majesties promise full protection of property, life, and faith, under a government by their own magistrates and according to their own laws; exemption from tribute for three years, and taxes thereafter regulated by the custom and ratio of their present imposts. To such Moors as, discontented with these provisions, would abandon Grenada, are promised free passage for themselves and their wealth. In return for these marks of their royal bounty, their most Christian majesties summon Grenada to surrender (if no succor meanwhile arrive) within seventy days. And these offers are now solemnly recorded in the presence and through the mission of the noble and renowned knight Gonzalvo of Cordova, deputed by their most Christian majesties from their new city of Santa Fe."

When the herald had concluded Boabdil cast his eye over his thronged and splendid court. No glance of fire met his own; amidst the silent crowd a resigned content

was alone to be perceived ; the proposals exceeded the hope of the besieged.

"And," asked Boabdil, with a deep-drawn sigh, "if we reject these offers?"

"Noble prince," said Gonzalvo, earnestly, "ask us not to wound thine ears with the alternative. Pause, and consider of our offers, and, if thou doubtest, O brave king! mount the towers of thine Alhambra, survey our legions marshaled beneath thy walls, and turn thine eyes upon a brave people, defeated not by human valor, but by famine and the inscrutable will of God!"

"Your monarchs shall have our answer, gentle Christian, perchance ere nightfall. And you, Sir Knight, who hast delivered a message bitter for kings to hear, receive at least our thanks for such bearing as might best mitigate the import. Our vizier will bear to your apartment those tokens of remembrance that are yet left to the monarch of Grenada to bestow."

"Muza," resumed the king, as the Spaniards left the presence, "thou hast heard all. What is the last counsel thou canst give thy sovereign?"

The fierce Moor had with difficulty waited this license to utter such sentiments as death only could banish from that unconquerable heart. He rose, descended from the couch, and, standing a little below the king, and facing the motley throng of all of wise or brave yet left to Grenada, thus spoke :

"Why should we surrender? two hundred thousand inhabitants are yet within our walls ; of these twenty thousand, at least, are Moors who have hands and swords. Why should we surrender? Famine presses us, it is true ; but hunger, that makes the lion more terrible, shall it make the man more base? Do ye despair? so be it ; despair, in the valiant, ought to have an irresistible force. Despair has made cowards brave ; shall it sink the brave to cowards? Let us arouse the people ; hitherto we have depended too much upon the nobles. Let us collect our whole force, and march upon this new city while the soldiers of Spain are employed in their new profession of architects and builders. Hear me, O God and Prophet of the Moslem ! hear one who never was fore-sworn ! If, Moors of Grenada, ye adopt my counsel, I cannot promise ye victory, but I promise ye never to live without it ; I promise ye, at least your independence, for

the dead know no chains ! Let us die, if we cannot live, so that we may leave to remotest ages a glory that shall be more durable than kingdoms. King of Grenada, this is the counsel of Muza Ben Abil Gazan."

The prince ceased. But he whose faintest word had once breathed fire into the dullest had now poured out his spirit upon frigid and lifeless matter. No man answered, no man moved.

Boabdil alone, clinging to the shadow of hope, turned at last toward the audience.

"Warriors and sages !" he said, "as Muza's counsel is your king's desire, say but the word, and, ere the hour-glass shed its last sand, the blast of our trumpet shall be ringing through the Vivarambla."

"O king ! light not against the will of fate—God is great !" replied the chief of the alfaquis.

"Alas !" said Abdelemic, "if the voice of Muza and your own fall thus coldly upon us, how can ye stir the breadless and heartless multitude?"

"Is such your general thought and your general will ?" said Boabdil.

A universal murmur answered "Yes."

"Go then, Abdelemic," resumed the ill-starred king, "go with you Spaniards to the Christian camp, and bring us back the best terms you can obtain. The crown has passed from the head of El Zogoybi ; Fate sets her zeal upon my brow. Unfortunate was the commencement of my reign—unfortunate its end. Break up the divan."

The words of Boabdil moved and penetrated an audience never till then so alive to his gentle qualities, his learned wisdom, and his natural valor. Many flung themselves at his feet with tears and sighs, and the crowd gathered round to touch the hem of his robe.

Muza gazed at them in deep disdain, with folded arms and heaving breast.

"Women, not men !" he exclaimed, "ye weep as if ye had not blood still left to shed ! Ye are reconciled to the loss of liberty because ye are told ye shall lose nothing else. Fools and dupes ! I see from the spot where my spirit stands above ye, the dark and dismal future to which you are crawling on your knees ; bondage and rapine ; the violence of lawless lust ; the persecution of hostile faith ; your gold wrung from ye by torture ; your

national name rooted from the soil. Bear this, and remember me ! Farewell, Boabdil ! you I pity not ; for your gardens have yet a poison and your armories a sword. Farewell, nobles and santons of Grenada ! I leave my country while it is yet free."

Scarcely had he ceased ere he had disappeared from the hall. It was as the parting genius of Grenada !

CHAPTER IV.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE SOLITARY HORSEMAN.

IT was a burning and sultry noon when, through a small valley skirted by rugged and precipitous hills, at a distance of several leagues from Grenada, a horseman in complete armor wound his solitary way. His mail was black and unadorned ; on his visor waved no plume. But there was something in his carriage and mien, and the singular beauty of his coal-black steed, which appeared to indicate a higher rank than the absence of page and squire, and the plainness of his accouterments, would have denoted to a careless eye. He rode very slowly ; and his steed, with the license of a spoiled favorite, often halted lazily in his sultry path as a tuft of herbage or the bough of some overhanging tree offered its temptation. At length, as he thus paused, a noise was heard in a copse that clothed the descent of a steep mountain ; and the horse started suddenly back, forcing the traveler from his reverie. He looked mechanically upward, and beheld the figure of a man bounding through the trees with rapid and irregular steps. It was a form that suited well the silence and solitude of the spot, and might have passed for one of those stern recluses, half hermit, half soldier, who, in earlier crusades, fixed their wild homes amidst the sands and caves of Palestine. The stranger supported his steps by a long staff. His hair and beard hung long and matted over his broad shoulders. A rusted mail, once splendid with arabesque enrichments, protected his breast ; but the

loose gown, a sort of tartan, which descended below the cuirass, was rent and and tattered, and his feet bare ; in his girdle was a short curved scimeter, a knife or dagger, a parchment roll, clasped and bound with iron.

As the horseman gazed at this abrupt intruder on the solitude, his frame quivered with emotion ; and, raising himself to his full height, he called aloud, " Fiend or santon, whatsoever thou art, what seekest thou in these lonely places, far from the king thy counsels deluded, and the city betrayed by thy false prophecies and unhal- lowed charms?"

" Ha !" cried Almamen, for it was indeed the Israel- ite ; " by thy black charger and the tone of thy haughty voice, I know the hero of Grenada. Rather, Muza Ben Abil Gazan, why art thou absent from the last hold of the Moorish empire?"

" Dost thou pretend to read the future, and art thou blind to the present? Grenada has capitulated to the Spaniard. Alone I have left a land of slaves, and shall seek, in our ancestral Africa, some spot where the foot- step of the misbeliever hath not trodden."

" The fate of one bigotry is then sealed," said Alma- men, gloomily ; " but that which succeeds it is yet more dark."

" Dog !" cried Muza, couching his lance, " what art thou that thus blasphemest?"

" A Jew !" replied Almamen, in a voice of thunder, and drawing his scimeter ; " a despised and despising Jew ! Ask you more ? I am the son of a race of kings. I was the worst enemy of the Moors till I found the Nazarene more hateful than the Moslem ; and then even Muza himself was not their more renowned champion. Come on, if thou wilt, man to man : I defy thee !"

" No, no," muttered Muza, sinking his lance ; " thy mail is rusted with the blood of the Spaniard, and this arm cannot smite the slayer of the Christian. Part we in peace."

" Hold, prince !" said Almamen, in an altered voice ; " is thy country the sole thing dear to thee ? Has the smile of woman never stolen beneath thine armor ? Has thy heart never beat for softer meetings than the en- counter of a foe?"

" Am I human and a Moor?" returned Muza. " For once you divine aright ; and, could thy spells bestow on

these eyes but one more sight of the last thing left to me on earth, I should be as credulous of thy sorcery as Boabdil."

"Thou lovest her still, then—this Leila?"

"Dark necromancer, hast thou read my secret? and knowst thou the name of my beloved one? Ah! let me believe thee indeed wise, and reveal to me the spot of earth which holds the treasure of my soul! Yes," continued the Moor, with increased emotion, and throwing up his visor as if for air; "yes, Allah forgive me! but, when all was lost at Grenada, I had still one consolation in leaving my fated birthplace; I had license to search for Leila; I had the hope to secure to my wanderings in distant lands one to whose glance the eyes of the houris would be dim. But I waste words. Tell me where is Leila, and conduct me to her feet."

"Moslem, I will lead thee to her," answered Almamen, gazing on the prince with an expression of strange and fearful exultation in his dark eyes; "I will lead thee to her—follow me. It was only yester-night that I learned the walls that confined her; and from that hour to this have I journeyed over mountain and desert, without rest or food."

"Yet what is she to thee?" asked Muza, suspiciously.

"Thou shalt learn full soon. Let us on."

So saying Almamen sprang forward with a vigor which the excitement of his mind supplied to the exhaustion of his body. Muza wonderingly pushed on his charger, and endeavored to draw his mysterious guide into conversation; but Almamen scarcely heeded him. His long fast, his solitary travels, his anxieties, his vicissitudes, and, more than all, his own fiery and consuming passions, were fast ripening into confirmed frenzy the half delirious emotions which had for months marred the natural keenness of his intellect; and, when he broke from his gloomy silence, it was but in incoherent and brief exclamations, often in a tongue foreign to the ear of his companion. The hardy Moor, though steeled against the superstitions of his race, less by the philosophy of the learned than the contempt of the brave, felt an awe gather over him as he glanced, from time to time, from the giant rocks and lonely valleys to the unearthly aspect and glittering eyes of the reputed sorcerer; and more than once he muttered such verses of the

Koran as he remembered, and were esteemed by his countrymen the counterspell of the machinations of the evil genii.

It might be an hour that they had thus journeyed together, when Almamen paused abruptly. "I am wearied," said he, faintly; "and, though time presses, I fear that my strength will fail me."

"Mount then, behind me," returned the Moor, after some natural hesitation; "Jew though thou art, I will brave the contamination for the sake of Leila."

"Moor!" cried the Hebrew, fiercely, "the contamination would be mine. Things of the yesterday, as thy prophet and thy creed are, thou canst not sound the unfathomable loathing which each heart, faithful to the Ancient of Days, feels for such as thou and thine."

"Now, by the Kaaba!" said Muza, and his brow became dark, "another such word, and the hoofs of my steed shall trample the breath of blasphemy from thy body."

"I would defy thee to the death," answered Almamen, disdainfully; "but I reserve the bravest of the Moors to behold a deed worthy of the descendant of Jephtha. But, hist! I hear hoofs."

Muza listened; and, at a distance beyond them, his sharp ear caught a distinct ring upon the hard and rocky soil. He turned round, and saw Almamen gliding away through the thick underwood until the branches concealed his form. Presently a curve in the path brought in view a Spanish cavalier, mounted on an Andalusian jennet: the horseman was gayly singing one of the popular ballads of the time; and as it related to the feats of the Spaniards against the Moors, Muza's haughty blood was already stirred, and his mustache quivered on his lip. "I will change the air," muttered the Moslem, grasping his lance; when, as the thought crossed him, he beheld the Spaniard suddenly reel in his saddle and fall prostrate on the ground. In the same instant Almamen had darted from his hiding-place, seized the steed of the cavalier, mounted, and, ere Muza recovered from his surprise, was by the side of the Moor.

"By what charm," said Muza, curbing his barb, "didst thou fell the Spaniard, seemingly without a blow?"

"As David felled Goliath—by the pebble and the

slung," answered Almamen, carelessly. "Now, then, spur forward, if thou art eager to see thy Leila."

The horsemen dashed over the body of the stunned and insensible Spaniard. Tree and mountain glided by; gradually the valley vanished, and a thick forest gloomed upon their path. Still they made on, though the interlaced boughs and the ruggedness of the footing somewhat obstructed their way; until, as the sun began slowly to decline, they entered a broad and circular space, round which trees of the eldest growth spread their motionless and shadowy boughs. In the midmost sward was a rude and antique stone, resembling the altar of some barbarous and departed creed. Here Almamen abruptly halted, and muttered inaudibly to himself.

"What moves thee, dark stranger?" said the Moor; "and why dost thou mutter and gaze on space?"

Almamen answered not, but dismounted, hung his bridle to a branch of a scathed and riven elm, and advanced alone into the middle of the space. "Dread and prophetic power that art within me!" said the Hebrew, aloud; "this, then, is the spot that, by dream and vision, thou hast foretold me wherein to consummate and record the vow that shall sever from the spirit the last weakness of the flesh. Night after night hast thou brought before mine eyes, in darkness and in slumber, the solemn solitude that I now survey. Be it so; I am prepared!"

Thus speaking, he retired for a few moments into the wood; collected in his arms the dry leaves and withered branches which cumbered the desolate clay, and placed the fuel upon the altar. Then, turning to the east, and raising his hands on high, he exclaimed, "Lo! upon this altar, once worshiped, perchance, by the heathen savage, the last bold spirit of thy fallen and scattered race dedicates, O Ineffable One! that precious offering thou didst demand of a sire of old. Accept the sacrifice!"

As the Hebrew ended this adjuration he drew a phial from his bosom, and sprinkled a few drops upon the arid fuel. A pale blue flame suddenly leaped up; and, as it lighted the haggard but earnest countenance of the Israelite, Muza felt his Moorish blood congeal in his veins, and shuddered, though he scarce knew why. Almamen

then, with his dagger, severed from his head one of his long locks, and cast it upon the flame. He watched it till it was consumed; and then, with a stifled cry, fell upon the earth in a dead swoon. The Moor hastened to raise him; he chafed his hands and temples; he unbuckled the vest upon his bosom; he forgot that his comrade was a sorcerer and a Jew, so much had the agony of that excitement moved his sympathy.

It was not till several minutes had elapsed that Almamen, with a deep-drawn sigh, recovered from his swoon. "Ah, beloved one! bride of my heart!" he murmured, "was it for this that thou didst commend to me the only pledge of our youthful love? Forgive me! I restore her to the earth, untainted by the Gentile." He closed his eyes again, and a strong convulsion shook his frame. It passed; and he rose as a man from a fearful dream, composed, and almost, as it were, refreshed, by the terrors he had undergone. The last glimmer of the ghastly light was dying away upon that ancient altar, and a low wind crept sighing through the trees.

"Mount, prince," said Almamen, calmly, but averting his eyes from the altar; "we shall have no more delays."

"Wilt thou not explain thy incantations?" asked Muza; "or is it, as my reason tells me, but the mummery of a juggler?"

"Alas! alas!" answered Almamen, in a sad and altered tone, "thou wilt soon know all."

CHAPTER V.

THE SACRIFICE.

THE sun was now sinking slowly through those masses of purple cloud which belong to Iberian skies, when, emerging from the forest, the travelers saw before them a small and lovely plain, cultivated like a garden. Rows of orange and citron trees were backed by the dark green foliage of vines; and these, again, found a barrier

in girdling copses of chestnut, oak, and the deeper verdure of pines ; while far to the horizon rose the distant and dim outline of the mountain range, scarcely distinguishable from the mellow colorings of the heaven. Through this charming spot went a slender and sparkling torrent, that collected its waters in a circular basin, over which the rose and orange hung their contrasted blossoms. On a gentle eminence above this plain or garden rose the spires of a convent ; and, though it was still daylight, the long and pointed lattices were illumined within ; and as the horsemen cast their eyes upon the pile, the sound of the holy chorus, made more sweet and solemn from its own indistinctness, from the quiet of the hour, from the sudden and sequestered loveliness of that spot, suiting so well the ideal calm of the conventual life, rolled its music through the odorous and luscious air.

But that scene and that sound, so calculated to soothe and harmonize the thoughts, seemed to arouse Almamen into agony and passion. He smote his breast with his clenched hand ; and shrieking, rather than exclaiming, "God of my fathers ! have I come too late ?" buried his spurs to the rowels in the sides of his panting steed. Along the sward, through the fragrant shrubs, athwart the pebbly and shallow torrent, up the ascent to the convent sped the Israelite. Muza, wondering and half reluctant, followed at a little distance. Clearer and nearer came the voices of the choir ; broader and redder glowed the tapers from the Gothic casements ; the porch of the convent chapel was reached ; the Hebrew sprang from his horse. A small group of the peasants dependent on the convent loitered reverently round the threshold ; pushing through them as one frantic, Almamen entered the chapel and disappeared.

A minute elapsed. Muza was at the door ; but the Moor paused irresolutely ere he dismounted. "What is the ceremony ?" he asked of the peasants.

"A nun is about to take the vows," answered one of them.

A cry of alarm, of indignation, of terror, was heard within. Muza no longer delayed ; he gave his steed to the bystander, pushed aside the heavy curtain that screened the threshold, and was within the chapel.

By the altar gathered a confused and disordered

group—the sisterhood with their abbess. Round the consecrated rail flocked the spectators, breathless and amazed. Conspicuous above the rest, on the elevation of the holy place, stood Almamen, with his drawn dagger in his right hand, his left arm clasped around the form of a novice, whose dress, not yet replaced by the serge, bespoke her the sister fated to the vail; and on the opposite side of that sister, one hand on her shoulder, the other rearing on high the sacred crucifix, stood a stern, calm, commanding form in the white robes of the Dominican order; it was Tomas de Torquemada.

“Avaunt, Abaddon!” were the first words which reached Muza’s ear, as he stood, unnoticed, in the middle of the aisle; “here thy sorcery and thine arts cannot avail thee. Release the devoted one of God!”

“She is mine! she is my daughter! I claim her from thee as a father, in the name of the great Sire of Man!”

“Seize the sorcerer! seize him!” exclaimed the inquisitor, as, with a sudden movement, Almamen cleared his way through the scattered and dismayed group, and stood with his daughter in his arms on the first step of the consecrated platform.

But not a foot stirred, not a hand was raised. The epithet bestowed on the intruder had only breathed a supernatural terror into the audience; and they would have sooner rushed upon a tiger in his lair than on the lifted dagger and savage aspect of that grim stranger.

“Oh, my father!” then said a low and faltering voice, that startled Muza as a voice from the grave, “wrestle not against the decrees of Heaven. Thy daughter is not compelled to her solemn choice. Humbly, but devotedly, a convert to the Christian creed, her only wish on earth is to take the consecrated and eternal vow.”

“Ha!” groaned the Hebrew, suddenly relaxing his hold as his daughter fell on her knees before him, “then have I indeed been told, as I have foreseen, the worst. The vail is rent—the spirit hath left the temple. Thy beauty is desecrated; thy form is but unhallowed clay. Dog!” he cried more fiercely, glaring round upon the unmoved face of the inquisitor, “this is thy work: but thou shalt not triumph. Here, by thine own shrine, I spit at and defy thee, as once before, amidst the tortures of thy inhuman court. Thus—thus—thus—Almamen

the Jew delivers the last of his house from the curse of Galilee !"

"Hold, murderer !" cried a voice of thunder ; and an armed man burst through the crowd and stood upon the platform. It was too late : thrice the blade of the Hebrew had passed through that innocent breast ; thrice was it reddened with that virgin blood. Leila fell in the arms of her lover ; her dim eyes rested upon his countenance as it shone upon her beneath his lifted visor ; a faint and tender smile played upon her lips ; Leila was no more.

One hasty glance Almamen cast upon his victim, and then, with a wild laugh that woke every echo in the dreary aisles, he leaped from the place. Brandishing his bloody weapon above his head, he dashed through the coward crowd ; and, ere even the startled Dominican had found a voice, the tramp of his headlong steed rang upon the air : an instant, and all was silent.

But over that murdered girl leaned the Moor, as yet incredulous of her death ; her head, still unshorn of its purple tresses, pillowed on his lap ; her icy hand clasped in his, and her blood weltering fast over his armor. None disturbed him ; for, habited as the knights of Christendom, none suspected his faith ; and all, even the Dominican, felt a thrill of sympathy at his distress. With the quickness of comprehension common to those climes, they understood at once that it was a lover who sustained that beautiful clay. How he came hither, with what object, what hope, their thoughts were too much locked in pity to conjecture. There, voiceless and motionless, bent the Moor ; until one of the monks approached and felt the pulse to ascertain if life was, indeed, utterly gone.

The Moor, at first, waved him haughtily away ; but, when he divined the monk's purpose, suffered him in silence to take the beloved hand. He fixed on him his dark and imploring eyes ; and when the father dropped the hand, and, gently shaking his head, turned away, a deep and agonizing groan was all that the audience heard from that heart in which the last iron of fate had entered. Passionately he kissed the brow, the cheeks, the lips of the hushed and angel face, and rose from the spot.

"What dost thou here ? and what knowst thou of yon

murderous enemy of God and man?" asked the Dominican, approaching.

Muza made no reply as he stalked slowly through the chapel. The audience was touched to sudden tears. "Forbear!" said they, almost with one accord, to the harsh inquisitor; "he hath no voice to answer thee."

And thus, amidst the oppressive grief and sympathy of the Christian throng, the unknown Paynim reached the door, mounted his steed, and, as he turned once more, and cast a hurried glance upon the fatal pile, the bystanders saw the large tears rolling down his swarthy cheeks.

Slowly that coal-black charger wound down the hillock, crossed the quiet and lovely garden, and vanished amidst the forest. And never was known, to Moor or Christian, the future fate of the hero of Grenada. Whether he reached in safety the shores of his ancestral Africa, and carved out new fortunes and a new name; or whether death, by disease or strife, terminated obscurely his glorious and brief career, mystery, deep and unpenetrated, even by the fancies of the thousand bards who have consecrated his deeds, wraps in everlasting shadow the destinies of Muza Ben Abil Gazan, from that hour when the setting sun threw its parting ray over his stately form and his ebon barb, disappearing amidst the breathless shadows of the forest.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETURN—THE RIOT—THE TREACHERY—AND THE DEATH.

It was the eve of the fatal day on which Grenada was to be delivered to the Spaniards, and in that subterranean vault beneath the house of Almamen, before described, three elders of the Jewish persuasion were met.

"Trusty and well-beloved Ximen," cried one, a wealthy and usurious merchant, with a twinkling and humid eye, and a sleek and unctuous aspect, which did not,

however, suffice to disguise something fierce and crafty in his low brow and pinched lips ; " trusty and well-beloved Ximen," said this Jew, " truly thou hast served us well in yielding to the persecuted brethren this secret shelter. Here, indeed, may the heathen search for us in vain. Verily, my veins grow warm again ; and thy servant hungereth, and hath thirst."

" Eat, Isaac, eat ; yonder are viands prepared for thee ; eat and spare not. And thou, Elias, wilt thou not draw near the board ? The wine is old and precious, and will revive thee."

" Ashes and hyssop, hyssop and ashes, are food and drink for me !" answered Elias, with passionate bitterness ; " they have razed my house, they have burned my granaries, they have molten down my gold. I am a ruined man !"

" Nay," said Ximen, who gazed at him with a malevolent eye (for so utterly had years and sorrows mixed with gall even the one kindlier sympathy he possessed, that he could not resist an inward chuckle over the very afflictions he relieved and the very impotence he protected), " nay, Elias, thou hast wealth yet left in the seaport towns sufficient to buy up half Grenada."

" The Nazarene will seize it all !" cried Elias ; " I see it already in his grasp !"

" Nay, thinkst thou so ? and wherefore ?" asked Ximen, startled into sincere, because selfish anxiety.

" Mark me ! Under license of the truce, I went last night to the Christian camp ; I had an interview with the Christian king ; and when he heard my name and faith, his very beard curled with ire. ' Hound of Belial !' he roared forth, ' has not thy comrade carrion, the sorcerer Almamen, sufficiently deceived and insulted the majesty of Spain ? For his sake ye shall have no quarter. Tarry here another instant, and thy corpse shall be swinging to the winds ! Go, and count over thy misgotten wealth ; just census shall be taken of it ; and if thou defraudest our holy impost by one piece of copper, thou shalt sup with Dives !' Such was my mission and mine answer. I return home to see the ashes of mine house ! Woe is me !"

" And this we owe to Almamen, the pretended Jew !" cried Isaac, from his solitary but not idle place at the board.

"I would this knife were at his false throat !" growled Elias, clutching his poniard with his long bony fingers.

"No chance of that," muttered Ximen ; "he will return no more to Grenada. The vulture and the worm have divided his carcass between them ere this ; and," he added inly, with a hideous smile, "his house and his gold have fallen into the hands of old, childless Ximen."

"This is a strange and fearful vault," said Isaac, quaffing a large goblet of the hot wine of the Vega : "here might the Witch of Endor have raised the dead. Yon door, whither doth it lead ?"

"Through passages none that I know of, save my master, hath trodden," answered Ximen. "I have heard that they reach even to the Alhambra. Come, worthy Elias ! thy form trembles with the cold ; take this wine."

"Hist !" said Elias, shaking from limb to limb, "our pursuers are upon us ; I hear a step !"

As he spoke, the door to which Isaac had pointed slowly opened, and Almamen entered the vault.

Had, indeed, a new Witch of Endor conjured up the dead, the apparition would not more have startled and appalled that goodly trio. Elias, gripping his knife, retreated to the farthest end of the vault. Isaac dropped the goblet he was about to drain, and fell on his knees. Ximen alone, growing, if possible, a shade more ghastly, retained something of self-possession as he muttered to himself, "He lives ! and his gold is not mine ! Curse him !"

Seemingly unconscious of the strange guests his sanctuary shrouded, Almamen stalked on like a man walking in his sleep.

Ximen roused himself, softly unbarred the door which admitted to the upper apartments, and motioned to his comrades to avail themselves of the opening ; but as Isaac, the first to accept the hint, crept across, Almamen fixed upon him his terrible eye ; and appearing suddenly to awake to consciousness, shouted out, "Thou miscreant, Ximen ! whom hast thou admitted to the secrets of thy lord ? Close the door ; these men must die !"

"Mighty master !" said Ximen, calmly, "is thy servant to blame that he believed the rumor that declared thy death ? These men are of our holy faith, whom I have snatched from the violence of the sacrilegious and mad-

dened mob. No spot but this seemed safe from the popular frenzy."

"Are ye Jews?" said Almamen. "Ah, yes! I know ye now—things of the market-place and bazar! Oh, ye are Jews, indeed! Go, go! Leave me!"

Waiting no further license, the three vanished; but, ere he left the vault, Elias turned back his scowling countenance on Almamen, who had sunk again into an absorbed meditation, with a glance of vindictive ire—Almamen was alone.

In less than a quarter of an hour Ximen returned to seek his master, but the place was again deserted.

It was midnight in the streets of Grenada; midnight, but not repose. The multitude, roused into one of their paroxysms of wrath and sorrow by the reflection that the morrow was indeed the day of their subjection to the Christian foe, poured forth through the streets to the number of twenty thousand. It was a wild and stormy night; those formidable gusts of wind, which sometimes sweep in sudden winter from the snows of the Sierra Nevada, howled through the tossing groves and along the winding streets. But the tempest seemed to heighten, as if by the sympathy of the elements, the popular storm and whirlwind. Brandishing arms and torches, and gaunt with hunger, the dark forms of the frantic Moors seemed like ghouls or specters rather than mortal men; as, apparently without an object, save that of venting their own disquietude or exciting the fears of earth, they swept through the desolate city.

In the broad space of the Vivarambla the crowd halted; irresolute in all else, but resolved, at least, that something for Grenada should yet be done. They were, for the most part, armed in their Moorish fashion; but they were wholly without leaders; not a noble, a magistrate, an officer would have dreamed of the hopeless enterprise of violating the truce with Ferdinand. It was a mere popular tumult—the madness of a mob; but not the less formidable, for it was an Eastern mob, and a mob with swords and shafts, with buckler and mail; the mob by which Oriental empires have been built and overthrown! There, in the splendid space that had witnessed the games and tournaments of that Arab and African chivalry; there, where for many a lustrum kings had reviewed devoted and conquering armies, assembled these

desperate men ; the loud winds agitating their tossing torches, that struggled against the moonless night.

"Let us storm the Alhambra !" cried one of the band ; 'let us seize Boabdil, and place him in the midst of us ; let us rush against the Christians, buried in their proud repose !"

"Lelilies ! Lelilies ! the Keys and the Crescent !" shouted the mob.

The shout died, and at the verge of the space was suddenly heard a once familiar and ever-thrilling voice.

The Moors who heard it turned round in amaze and awe, and beheld, raised upon the stone upon which the criers or heralds had been wont to utter the royal proclamations, the form of Almamen the santón, whom they had deemed already with the dead.

"Moors and people of Grenada !" he said, in a solemn but hollow voice, "I am with ye still. Your monarch and your heroes have deserted ye, but I am with ye to the last ! Go not to the Alhambra ; the fort is impenthrable, the guard faithful. Night will be wasted, and the day bring upon you the Christian army. March to the gates ; pour along the Vega ; descend at once upon the foe !"

He spoke, and then drew forth his saber ; it gleamed in the torchlight ; the Moors bowed their heads in fanatic reverence ; the santón sprang from the stone and passed into the center of the crowd.

Then once more arose joyful shouts. The multitude had found a leader worthy of their enthusiasm, and in regular order they formed themselves rapidly, and swept down the narrow streets.

Swelled by several scattered groups of desultory marauders (the ruffians and refuse of the city), the infidel numbers were now but a few furlongs from the great gate whence they had been wont to issue on the foe. And then, perhaps, had the Moors passed these gates and reached the Christian encampment, lulled as it was in security and sleep, that wild army of twenty thousand desperate men might have saved Grenada : and Spain might at this day possess the only civilized empire which the faith of Mohammed ever founded.

But the evil star of Boabdil prevailed. The news of the insurrection in the city reached him. Two aged men from the lower city arrived at the Alhambra ; demanded

and obtained an audience; and the effect of that interview was instantaneous upon Boabdil. In the popular frenzy he saw only a justifiable excuse for the Christian king to break the conditions of the treaty, raze the city, and exterminate the inhabitants. Touched by a generous compassion for his subjects, and actuated no less by a high sense of kingly honor, which led him to preserve a truce solemnly sworn to, he once more mounted his cream-colored charger, with the two elders who had sought him by his side, and at the head of his guard rode from the Alhambra. The sound of his trumpets, the tramp of his steeds, the voice of his heralds, simultaneously reached the multitude; and, ere they had leisure to decide their course, the king was in the midst of them.

"What madness is this, O my people?" cried Boabdil, spurring into the midst of the throng; "whither would ye go?"

"Against the Christian! against the Goth!" shouted a thousand voices. "Lead us on! The santón is risen from the dead, and will ride by thy right hand!"

"Alas!" resumed the king, "ye would march against the Christian king! Remember that our hostages are in his power; remember that he will desire no better excuse to level Grenada with the dust, and put you and your children to the sword. We have made such treaty as never yet was made between foe and foe. Your lives, laws, wealth, all are saved. Nothing is lost save the crown of Boabdil. I am the only sufferer. So be it. My evil star brought on you these evil destinies; without me you may revive and be once more a nation. Yield to fate to-day, and you may grasp her proudest awards to-morrow. To succumb is not to be subdued. But go forth against the Christians, and if ye win one battle, it is but to incur a more terrible war; if you lose, it is not honorable capitulation, but certain extermination, to which you rush! Be persuaded, and listen once again to your king."

The crowd were moved, were softened, were half convinced. They turned in silence toward their santón, and Almamen did not shrink the appeal. Little as he cared for the Moors, his hatred for the Christians spurred him on to any measure that might redden the earth with their abhorred blood. He stood forth confronting the king.

"King of Grenada!" he cried aloud, "behold thy friend—thy prophet! Lo! I assure you victory!"

"Hold!" interrupted Boabdil, "thou hast deceived and betrayed me too long! Moors! know ye this pretended santón! He is of no Moslem creed. He is a hound of Israel, who would sell you to the best bidder. Slay him!"

"Ha!" cried Almamen, "and who is my accuser?"

"Thy servant—behold him!" At these words the royal guards lifted their torches, and the glare fell redly on the death-like features of Ximen.

"Light of the world! there be other Jews that know him," said the traitor.

"Will ye suffer a Jew to lead you, O race of the Prophet?" cried the king.

The crowd stood confused and bewildered; Almamen felt his hour was come; he remained silent, his arms folded, his brow erect.

"Be there any of the tribe of Moisa among the crowd?" cried Boabdil, pursuing his advantage; "if so, let them approach and testify what they know." Forth came, not from the crowd, but from among Boabdil's train, a well-known Israelite.

"We disown this man of blood and fraud," said Elias, bowing to the earth; "but he was of our creed."

"Speak, false santón! art thou dumb?" cried the king.

"A curse light on thee, dull fool!" cried Almamen, fiercely. "What matters who the instrument that would have restored to thee thy throne? Yes; I, who have ruled thy councils, who have led thine armies, I am of the race of Joshua and of Samuel; and the Lord of Hosts is the God of Almamen!"

A shudder ran through that mighty multitude; but the looks, the mien, and the voice of the man awed them; and not a weapon was raised against him. He might, even then, have passed scathless through the crowd; he might have borne to other climes his burning passions and his torturing woes; but his care for life was past; he desired but to curse his dupes and to die. He paused, looked round, and burst into a laugh of such bitter and haughty scorn, as the tempted of earth may hear, in the halls below, from the lips of Eblis.

"Yes," he exclaimed, "such I am! I have been your

idol and your lord ; I may be your victim, but in death I am your vanquisher. Christian and Moslem alike my foe, I would have trampled upon both. But the Christian, wiser than you, gave me smooth words, and I would have sold ye to his power ; wickedder than you, he deceived me, and I would have crushed him, that I might have continued to deceive and rule the puppets that ye call your chiefs. But they for whom I toiled, and labored, and sinned ; for whom I surrendered peace and ease, yea, and a daughter's person and a daughter's blood, they have betrayed me to your hands, and the Curse of Old rests with them evermore, Amen ! The disguise is rent ; Almamen the santón is the son of Issachar the Jew !"

More he might have said, but the spell was broken. With a ferocious yell those living waves of the multitude rushed over the stern fanatic ; six scimeters passed through him, and he fell not ; at the seventh he was a corpse. Trodden in the clay, then whirled aloft, limb torn from limb ; ere a man could have drawn breath nine times, scarce a vestige of the human form was left to the mangled and bloody clay.

One victim sufficed to slake the wrath of the crowd. They gathered, like wild beasts, whose hunger is appeased, around their monarch, who in vain had endeavored to stay their summary revenge, and who now, pale and breathless, shrunk from the passions he had excited. He faltered forth a few words of remonstrance and exhortation, turned the head of his steed, and took his way to his palace.

The crowd dispersed, but not yet to their homes. The crime of Almamen worked against his whole race. Some rushed to the Jews' quarter, which they set on fire ; others to the lonely mansion of Almamen.

Ximen, on leaving the king, had been before the mob. Not anticipating such an effect of the popular rage, he had hastened to the house, which he now deemed at length his own. He had just reached the treasury of his dead lord ; he had just feasted his eyes on the massive ingots and glittering gems : in the lust of his heart, he had just cried aloud, "And these are mine !" when he heard the roar of the mob below the wall—when he saw the glare of their torches against the casement. It was in vain that he shrieked aloud, "I am the man that exposed

the Jew !” the wild winds scattered his words over a deafened audience. Driven from his chamber by the smoke and flame, afraid to venture forth among the crowd, the miser loaded himself with the most precious of the store ; he descended the steps, he bent his way to the secret vault, when suddenly the floor, pierced by the flames, crashed under him, and the fire rushed up in a fiercer and more rapid volume as his death-shriek broke through that lurid shroud.

Such were the principal events of the last night of the Moorish dynasty in Grenada.

CHAPTER VII.

THE END.

DAY dawned upon Grenada : the populace had sought their homes, and a profound quiet wrapped the streets, save where, from the fires committed in the late tumult, was yet heard the crash of roofs, or the crackle of the light and fragrant timber employed in those pavilions of the summer. The manner in which the mansions of Grenada were built, each separated from the other by extensive gardens, fortunately prevented the flames from extending. But the inhabitants cared so little for the hazard, that not a single guard remained to watch the result. Now and then some miserable forms in the Jewish gown might be seen cowering by the ruins of their house, like the souls that, according to Plato, watch in charnels over their own moldering bodies. Day dawned, and the beams of the winter sun, smiling away the clouds of the past night, played cheerily on the murmuring waves of the Xenil and the Darro.

Alone, upon a balcony commanding that stately landscape, stood the last of the Moorish kings. He had sought to bring to his aid all the lessons of the philosophy he had cultivated.

“What are we,” thought the musing prince, “that we should fill the world with ourselves—we kings? Earth

resounds with the crash of my falling throne ; on the ear of races unborn the echo will live prolonged. But what have I lost ? nothing that was necessary to my happiness, my repose ; nothing save the source of all my wretchedness, the Marah of my life ! Shall I less enjoy heaven and earth, or thought or action, or man's more material luxuries of food and sleep—the common and the cheap desires of all ? At the worst, I sink but to a level with chiefs and princes : I am but leveled with those whom the multitude admire and envy. Arouse thee, then, O heart within me ! many and deep emotions of sorrow or of joy are yet left to break the monotony of existence.”

He paused, and at the distance his eye fell upon the lonely minarets of the distant and deserted palace of Muza Ben Abil Gazan.

“Thou wert right, then,” resumed the king ; “thou wert right, brave spirit, not to pity Boabdil ; but not because death was in his power ; man's soul is greater than his fortunes, and there is majesty in a life that towers above the ruins that fall around its path.” He turned away, and his cheek suddenly grew pale ; for he heard in the courts below the tread of hoofs, the bustle of preparation : it was the hour for his departure. His philosophy vanished : he groaned aloud, and re-entered the chamber just as his vizier and the chief of his guard broke upon his solitude.

The old vizier attempted to speak, but his voice failed him.

“It is time, then, to depart,” said Boabdil, with calmness ; “let it be so : render up the palace and the fortress, and join thy friend, no more thy monarch, in his new home.”

He staid not for reply ; he hurried on, descended to the court, flung himself on his barb, and with a small and saddened train passed through the gate which we yet survey, by a blackened and crumbling tower, overgrown with vines and ivy ; thence amidst gardens, now appertaining to the convent of the victor faith, he took his mournful and unnoticed way. When he came to the middle of the hill that rises above those gardens, the steel of the Spanish armor gleamed upon him as the detachment sent to occupy the palace marched over the summit in steady order and profound silence.

At the head of the vanguard rode, upon a snow-white

palfrey, the Bishop of Avila, followed by a long train of barefooted monks. They halted as Boabdil approached, and the grave bishop saluted him with the air of one who addresses an infidel and an inferior. With the quick sense of dignity common to the great, and yet more to the fallen, Boabdil felt, but resented not, the pride of the ecclesiastic. "Go, Christian," said he, mildly, "the gates of the Alhambra are open, and Allah has bestowed the palace and the city upon your king : may his virtues atone the faults of Boabdil !" So saying, and waiting no answer, he rode on without looking to the right or left. The Spaniards also pursued their way. The sun had fairly risen above the mountains when Boabdil and his train beheld, from the eminence on which they were, the whole armament of Spain ; and at the same moment, louder than the tramp of horse or the flash of arms, was heard distinctly the solemn chant of *Te Deum*, which preceded the blaze of the unfurled and lofty standards. Boabdil, himself still silent, heard the groans and exclamations of his train ; he turned to cheer or chide them, and then saw, from his own watch-tower, with the sun shining full upon its pure and dazzling surface, the silver cross of Spain. His Alhambra was already in the hands of the foe ; while beside that badge of the holy war waved the gay and flaunting flag of St. Iago, the canonized Mars of the chivalry of Spain.

At that sight the king's voice died within him ; he gave the rein to his barb, impatient to close the fatal ceremonial, and did not slacken his speed till almost within bowshot of the first ranks of the army. Never had Christian war assumed a more splendid and imposing aspect. Far as the eye could reach extended the glittering and gorgeous lines of that goodly power, bristling with sunlighted spears and blazoned banners ; while beside murmured, and glowed, and danced the silver and laughing Xenil, careless what lord should possess, for his little day, the banks that bloomed by its everlasting course. By a small mosque halted the flower of the army. Surrounded by the archpriests of that mighty hierarchy, the peers and princes of a court that rivaled the Rolands of Charlemagne, was seen the kingly form of Ferdinand himself, with Isabel at his right hand, and the high-born dames of Spain, relieving, with their gay

colors and sparkling gems, the sterner splendor of the crested helmet and polished mail.

Within sight of the royal group Boabdil halted, composed his aspect so as best to conceal his soul, and, a little in advance of his scanty train, but never, in mien and majesty, more a king, the son of Abdallah met his haughty conqueror.

At the sight of his princely countenance and golden hair, his comely and commanding beauty, made more touching by youth, a thrill of compassionate admiration ran through that assembly of the brave and fair. Ferdinand and Isabel slowly advanced to meet their late rival, their new subject; and, as Boabdil would have dismounted, the Spanish king placed his hand upon his shoulder. "Brother and prince," said he, "forget thy sorrows; and may our friendship hereafter console thee for reverses against which thou hast contended as a hero and a king; resisting man, but resigned at length to God!"

Boabdil did not affect to return this bitter but unintentional mockery of compliment. He bowed his head, and remained a moment silent; then motioning to his train, four of his officers approached, and, kneeling beside Ferdinand, proffered to him, upon a silver buckler, the keys of the city.

"O king!" then said Boabdil, "accept the keys of the last hold which has resisted the arms of Spain! The empire of the Moslem is no more. Thine are the city and the people of Grenada; yielding to thy prowess, they yet confide in thy mercy."

"They do well," said the king; "our promises shall not be broken. But, since we know the gallantry of Moorish cavaliers, not to us, but to gentler hands shall the keys of Grenada be surrendered."

Thus saying, Ferdinand gave the keys to Isabel, who would have addressed some soothing flatteries to Boabdil; but the emotion and excitement were too much for her compassionate heart, heroine and queen though she was; and when she lifted her eyes upon the calm and pale features of the fallen monarch, the tears gushed from them irresistibly, and her voice died in murmurs. A faint flush overspread the features of Boabdil, and there was a momentary pause of embarrassment, which the Moor was the first to break.

"Fair queen," said he, with mournful and pathetic dignity, "thou canst read the heart that thy generous sympathy touches and subdues : this is thy last nor least glorious conquest. But I detain ye : let not my aspect cloud your triumph. Suffer me to say farewell."

"May we not hint at the blessed possibility of conversion?" whispered the pious queen, through her tears, to her royal consort.

"Not now—not now, by Saint Iago !" returned Ferdinand, quickly, and in the same tone, willing himself to conclude a painful conference. He then added, aloud, "Go, my brother, and fair fortune with you ! Forget the past."

Boabdil smiled bitterly, saluted the royal pair with profound and silent reverence, and rode slowly on, leaving the army below as he ascended the path that led to his new principality beyond the Alpuxarras. As the trees snatched the Moorish cavalcade from the view of the king, Ferdinand ordered the army to recommence its march, and trumpet and cymbal presently sent their music to the ear of the Moslems.

Boabdil spurred on at full speed till his panting charger halted at the little village where his mother, his slaves, and his faithful Amine (sent on before) awaited him. Joining these, he proceeded without delay upon his melancholy path.

They ascended that eminence which is the pass into the Alpuxarras. From its height, the vale, the rivers, the spires, the towers of Grenada broke gloriously upon the view of the little band. They halted mechanically and abruptly : every eye was turned to the beloved scene. The proud shame of baffled warriors, the tender memories of home, of childhood, of fatherland, swelled every heart and gushed from every eye. Suddenly the distant boom of artillery broke from the citadel, and rolled along the sunlighted valley and crystal river. A universal wail burst from the exiles ; it smote, it overpowered the heart of the ill-starred king, in vain seeking to wrap himself in Eastern pride or stoical philosophy. The tears gushed from his eyes, and he covered his face with his hands.

Then said his haughty mother, gazing at him with hard and disdainful eyes, in that unjust and memorable

reproach which history has preserved, "Ay, weep like a woman over what thou couldst not defend like a man."

Boabdil raised his countenance with indignant majesty, when he felt his hand tenderly clasped, and, turning round, saw Amine by his side.

"Heed her not ! heed her not, Boabdil !" said the slave ; " never didst thou seem to me more noble than in that sorrow. Thou wert a hero for thy throne ; but feel still, O light of mine eyes, a woman for thy people !"

"God is great !" said Boabdil, "and God comforts me still ! Thy lips, which never flattered me in my power, have no reproach for me in my affliction !"

He said, and smiled upon Amine ; it was *her* hour of triumph.

The band wound slowly on through the solitary defiles : and that place where the king wept and the woman soothed is still called, "El ultimo suspiro del Moro"—
THE LAST SIGH OF THE MOOR.

THE END.

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